The cover graphic is based on an ancient Egyptian hieroglyph representing the all-seeing eye of the powerful sky god, Horus. Segments of this "eye in the sky" became hieroglyphic signs for measuring fractions in ancient Egypt. Intriguingly, however, the sum of the physical segments adds up to only 63/64 and, thus, never reaches the equivalent of the whole, or perfection. Similarly, verification is unlikely to be perfect.

Today, a core element in the multilateral arms control verification process is likely to be the unintrusive "eye in the sky," or space-based remote sensing system. These space-based techniques will have to be supplemented by a package of other methods of verification such as airborne and ground-based sensors as well as some form of on-site inspection and observations. All these physical techniques add together, just as the fractions of the eye of Horus do, to form the "eye" of verification. Physical verification, however, will not necessarily be conclusive and there is likely to remain a degree of uncertainty in the process. Adequate and effective verification, therefore, will still require the additional, non-physical, element of judgement, represented by the unseen fraction of the eye of Horus.

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Direction du contrôle des armements et du désarmement
Affaires extérieures et Commerce extérieur Canada
Tour A
125, promenade Sussex
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Canada
K1A 0G2

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Security Considerations and Verification of a Central American Arms Control Regime

By Professor H.P. Klepak

Department of

Strategic Studies

Collège Militaire Royal

de Saint-Jean

prepared for

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Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

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Abstract

This paper discusses the background to, likely contexts of, and likely difficulties with the verification of a possible Central American arms control regime. It begins with a brief geographic, political and military overview of the regional crisis, setting the stage for the discussion to follow. Further chapters offer an analysis of the relative threat perceptions of the individual Central American states, the potential for a revision of those threat perceptions based upon a number of factors, including the terrain, the offensive and defensive weapons mix and political factors. It then proposes one possible arms control regime for the region, followed by a more in-depth discussion of what would actually have to be verified under such a regime, how the verifying might in fact be carried out, and who might best do it.

Résumé

Le présent document traite des antécédents, des contextes possibles et surtout des difficultés que pourrait présenter la vérification d'un régime de contrôle des armements en Amérique centrale. Le document commence par une brève analyse de la situation politique, militaire et diplomatique entourant la crise régionale, afin de préparer le lecteur à la partie suivante. Les chapitres subséquents offrent une analyse des perceptions de menace relatives des États d'Amérique centrale, pris individuellement, de la possibilité de modifier ces perceptions de menace en se basant sur diverses considérations incluant le terrain, la combinaison d'armes offensives et défensives et enfin les facteurs politiques. Un régime de contrôle des armements pour la région est alors proposé, suivi d'une discussion plus approfondie de ce qui devrait, en fait, être vérifié sous un tel régime, comment cette vérification pourrait être conduite, de même que le meilleur moyen pour y arriver.

Resumen

Este trabajo estudia los antecedentes, posibles contextos y dificultades probables que sucitaría la verificación de un régimen de control de armamentos en América Central. Comienza con un breve análisis geogáfico, político, y militar de la crisis regional, estableciendo el marco para el debate que tendrá lugar. Los capítulos siguientes ofrencen un analisis de las percepciones de amenaza relativas de cada uno de los estados centroamericanos, de la posibilidad de cambiar estas percepciones de amenaza basado sobre varios factores incluyendo el terreno, la política y la combinación de armas offensivas y defensivas. A continuación propone un régimen de control de armamentos para la región, seguido de una discusión más detenida de lo que tendría que ser verificado realmente bajo dicho régimen, cómo podría llevarse a cabo de hecho la verificación, y quién podría hacerla mejor.

Preface

Canadian interest in the Central American peace process is long standing. It has been expressed through consistent statements of support for peace initiatives in the region, and especially for those of the Contadora Group, and through offers of assistance in a wide range of areas of activity connected with the search for a settlement. With the passage of time, this interest has brought about an increased expectation on the part of the international community, and particularly of the Central American states themselves, that Canada will wish to help where it can in the process.

The probability of a Canadian role of some importance has therefore grown with the years. Indeed, Canada is already involved in assisting with the preparation of plans for eventual verification arrangements connected with a peace treaty in the region. In recent months, it has also participated in the planning for a United Nations observer mission for Central America.

At the same time, the Verification Research Unit (VRU) of External Affairs and International Trade Canada, set up and went forward with a series of research projects on a whole variety of issues related to the verification of arms control agreements, and the implications thereof. This has resulted in several publications, one by this author dealing with regional arms control problems in the Third World. The VRU continues to believe that it will be able to draw conclusions from these other areas of the world, which may have a value in the attempt to address similar issues in Central Europe and vice versa.

The first paper by this author, "Verification of a Central American Peace Accord,"* looked at the verification context for the whole of the political and security aspects of a general peace plan in Central America. This second paper concentrates on the question of verification of an arms control regime, which might be helpful in building confidence among the states of the region, confronting as they do major obstacles of mutual distrust.

Note: It will be clear from the text that this manuscript was submitted prior to the decision to deploy forces in response to the request of the United Nations Secretary-General. Since this paper discusses the long-term requirements for an arms control regime in Central America, it has been produced without attempting to provide an immediate update on what has been a constantly and rapidly evolving situation.

* *Arms Control Verification Occasional Papers No. 2* (Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1989).

Author's Addendum

Events in Central America, as in many other parts of the world, have been moving at an extraordinarily rapid pace over the last few months. When research on this paper was completed, there had as yet been no elections in Nicaragua, there was no accord implying the disarming of the Contras, and peace in El Salvador seemed far away.

By the spring, the Central American situation looked very different compared to even two months previously, and it may seem that the relevance of work done just before that time has lost much of its significance to the ongoing context. The government in Managua, to the surprise of almost all observers, is a pluralist democracy very well seen by Washington and by most liberal Western publics. Negotiations between governments and armed opposition in El Salvador, while far from totally favourable, have progressed much further than one was entitled to hope before.

This paper examines a variety of factors bearing on an arms control regime for Central America, and it is firmly believed that many of these factors remain at least largely applicable. The approach is to look at the political and military context with a view to seeing the kind of verification which would be needed to underpin such an arms control regime. Unfortunately, despite the progress made with the peace process recently, it is nonetheless true that the situation is far from a context of mutual respect and general acceptance of the status quo in the region. El Salvador and Honduras have in no way agreed to a permanent end to their border conflict. Guatemala is seeing an increase, not a decline, in the level of guerrilla violence in this country. Nicaragua's UNO government is far from enjoying either universal support at home or unity within its ranks. The Sandinista position in the armed forces of that country remains a reason for caution when discussing long-lasting peace. Finally, recent events in Panama and those connected with the drug trade and its increasing militarization suggest caution when considering the likelihood of generalized stability in the region.

This paper seeks to highlight factors which tend to have long life and are difficult to resolve. For this reason, it is felt that the discussion remains relevant. The increasing involvement of the United Nations and the Organization of the American States, as well as Canada, brings out an increasing need for an attempt to make the peace in Central America a stable one. Through the discussion herein of the threat perceptions of the countries involved, perceptions which have been modified but not erased, it is hoped that a contribution to this understanding has been made and that this contribution is still relevant to the questions related to verification of an eventual Central American arms control regime.

H.P. Klepak; June, 1990

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To Second Lieutenant Donald Neill, Acting Sub-Lieutenant Dean Martins, Mr. Pierre Bouchard and Mr. Michael Losey, my thanks for their very valuable assistance.

List of Abbreviations

CBM	Confidence-Building Measures
CIIPS	Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security
CIVS	International Verification and Follow-Up Commission (CIVS after its Spanish acronym)
CONDECA	Consejo de Defensa Centroamericano
CSCE	Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
EAITC	External Affairs and International Trade Canada
EEC	European Economic Community
FMLN	Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional
FSLN	Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OAS	Organization of American States
U.K.	United Kingdom
UNO	Union Nacional Opositora
UN	United Nations
U.S.	United States
VRU	Verification Research Unit

Introduction

Central America is well into its second decade of major levels of conflict and international crisis. The region, which had been witness to lower levels of fighting since the early 1960s, had become the scene of major war by the key year of 1978. The next year saw the arrival in power in Nicaragua of a left-leaning government which was soon at odds with its more conservative neighbours, as well as with the regional superpower, the United States.

The 1980s began with an increase in intensity of the insurgency in El Salvador, and an increasing threat to the Nicaraguan regime in the form of the counter-revolutionary forces known as the Contras. Elsewhere in the area, instability was also on the increase with the long-simmering guerrilla war in Guatemala gaining in momentum until the major government victories of 1983 and 1984.

Even in the relatively quiet countries of the area, unrest was not far from the surface. In Honduras, the "sleepy hollow" of Central America, small groups of guerrillas began to operate. And in Costa Rica, the only firm democracy and largely middle-class state in the region, social disturbances grew in intensity.

This situation brought about a series of Latin American, Western European and other diplomatic initiatives to bring peace to the area, but all of these failed to achieve this final objective. The vast range and complexity of the issues at stake in the conflicts in Central America, and the involvement of outside powers therein, have further complicated peace efforts.

Canada has from early on in the conflict sought a resolution which would bring peace to the whole region, encourage economic growth and social justice, reassure the United States on its legitimate security concerns vis-à-vis instability in the region, and produce a long-term security context satisfactory to all of the states involved.

One of the crucial elements of any durable peace in Central America is, of course, a reduction of the tensions born out of the endemic distrust and heightened perception of threat each of the five republics habours against its neighbouring states. Central America is a heavily armed zone, particularly when one considers the relatively small military forces that have traditionally been present in this area. Years of civil war, insurgency, threats of war, international intervention and general instability have fuelled, and have been fuelled by, dramatic growth in the armed services. Given the context of mutual distrust, it is not surprising that an increase in the strength and capabilities of one army has a strong tendency to lead to a reaction from neighbouring states, which generally takes the form of an increase in their own forces to compensate.

The purpose of this paper is to suggest factors for consideration in any discussion of an arms control regime in the region and, most particularly, of its verification requirements. There is little doubt as to the desperate need for confidence-building measures in the Central American political context. Given the role and strength of regional armed forces, a major segment of such measures must necessarily be military, or at least defence-related. Threat perception lies at the very heart of continuing distrust and militarization in all countries of the area. An arms control regime could be a principal element in reversing this trend. However, given the levels of distrust among the countries of Central America, not to mention between groups within these countries, the verification element of any arms control agreement will be central to the short- and long-term success of such an accord.

This paper provides a brief background to the current crisis, and follows this with a short introduction to the framework of threat perceptions in Central America. After these introductory sections, the paper presents factors that could reduce these threat perceptions, and thereby hopefully suggest means to produce an arms control regime for the area. The following brief chapter suggests an outline of such a regime. This is followed by an examination of what would need to be verified in such an arms control regime. Following this examination is a discussion of how such matters might be verified, and of who might actually do the verifying. The final sections address some specific constraints to progress in this area, and then point to prospects and conclusions.

The study works within a wide variety of constraints and assumptions. It takes for granted that no arms control regime will be established without the prior disarming of irregular forces operating against the established regimes of the region. It also accepts that the lack or distortion of information makes analyses of Central American political — and especially military — affairs an extremely risky business. Accuracy in assessment is also limited by the very dubious reliability of much data on the whole range of political and defence concerns which this paper will address.

It must also be emphasized at the outset that the real "will to peace" of the parties to the conflicts and crises within the region is on occasion open to doubt. Entrenched interests may be using the peace process to stall, or indeed halt, the pressure for change. Rebel forces are at times more than accustomed to long and drawn-out fighting at a relatively low level of intensity, and both government and rebel forces may well remain uninterested in peace accords that require significant concessions on their part. In the case of the armed forces, there is no doubt that the cuts in numbers, equipment and capabilities which in most cases will be vital if an arms control regime is to be put in place, will run into severe opposition, or at least obstructionism. These armed forces are, of course, extremely powerful elements of all governments in the region, with the exception of Costa Rica, and

are as often as not the real "power behind the throne." Any verification regime must keep this state of affairs in mind at all times, especially given the tendency of right-wing extremists in the forces of several of the countries involved to take the law into their own hands when they feel their collective interests are at stake.

Thus, one must grapple with many variables in the attempt to set out the verification aspects of an arms control regime for the Central American region. Nonetheless, the lack of any previous detailed discussion of the factors involved combined with the potential contribution of such a verification process for such an arms control regime makes the exercise worthwhile.

Background

Central America as a term traditionally refers to the five republics of Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica. Belize, until recently a British colony, is normally considered more a Caribbean state than a Central American one, although it is of course geographically part of the region. Equally, Panama can be taken to be part of Central America, but because of its historic integration into first the Spanish colony of Nueva Granada, and then into the Republic of Colombia, it is normally considered part of South America. For our purposes, then, the historic definition of the region as the five states inheriting the territory of the Captaincy-General of Guatemala, the Spanish colonial administrative unit of the whole zone, will be accepted.

This larger colonial Guatemala was in many ways a nearly forgotten region of the Spanish Empire, because of its relative lack of valuable mineral resources and local population. Despite Madrid's indifference, other powers active in the Caribbean, especially Great Britain, found good reason for increasing their involvement in the coastal regions. One constant consideration derived from strategic interest in Central America's position athwart the sea lanes leading to the isthmus of Panama, this phenomenon being obvious as early as the first years of the Spanish conquest. Furthermore, an alternate short route to or from Europe appeared to be offered by the Nicaraguan waterway system involving the Rio San Juan and Lake Nicaragua.

In the years following independence, this strategic factor accounted for more and more interest in the region on the part of the great powers, especially Great Britain and the United States — although it must again be mentioned that the Panamanian route option involved relations with the South American state of Colombia and not, strictly speaking, with Central America. Thus, a picture emerges of a Central America characterized, well into the nineteenth century, as outside the mainstream of imperial, and indeed Latin American, developments. This sense of isolation had in fact been reinforced by the movements for independence locally, which were largely composed of insurrections mounted by essentially conservative forces against a government in Madrid which they viewed as too liberal.

Thus the insurrections, lacking a revolutionary social context, brought little change to the status of penury of the bulk of the population. With the incorporation of Latin America into the world division of labour in the years preceding the First World War, Central America shared (although somewhat belatedly and in a rather truncated fashion) the larger region's economic growth. Monocultures, or at best agricultural economies based on only a few export crops, became the rule, and European and American investment was followed by increasing great power interest in all five local republics. World War I, the Great Depression and World

War II were eventually to mean that no other power could remain in competition with the United States for influence in the area. Indeed, by the end of the first of these great shocks to the international division of labour, the United States was more than just one among equals in Central America. Washington had come to dominate the trading and investment patterns of all five republics, and political and military interventions in their domestic affairs became commonplace.

In military terms, the alliance between the United States and the Central American republics during the Second World War, then through the Rio Pact of 1947 and the OAS Charter of 1948, meant an increasing incorporation of the armed forces of Central America into a relationship of already close co-operation between foreign investors and the local oligarchies of Central America. The temporary arrival of leftist reformism in Guatemala in 1954, and more permanently and radically of Castroist communism in Cuba after 1959, made this military co-operation into a permanent and close alliance of shared interests in stability and conservatism.

Geography has also reinforced negative trends in the development and national independence of Central America. The region is dominated, generally speaking, by high mountains in the centre, trailing off to plains leading down to both the Atlantic (Caribbean) and Pacific coasts. Flowing down from the mountains are innumerable rivers and streams subsequently dividing up the plains which on the West coast tend to be savanna and relatively rich agriculturally, and on the East coast more forested, or even jungle. The five republics thus have a wide variety of terrain features, a characteristic that has hindered transport and other communications development, and thereby the economy as a whole. The high mountains of the central region pose particularly difficult obstacles for trade within the nations themselves, and the lack of first imperial, and then international, interest in developing an infrastructure of roads, and later railroads (except for the purpose of exploiting primary resources), meant that these original geographical problems remain largely in place.

The region, then, is made up of isolated communities; of oligarchies, far from numerous, cohabiting with impoverished masses; and of middle classes small and shaky in composition. Despite the very small size of the area, and the lack of population, travel is difficult except by air, and political divisions run quite deep. The kind of meddling in one another's affairs which appears endemic in the region in the 1980s has in fact rarely been absent in the roughly 165 years since independence.

None of the above should lead to the conclusion that there has been no change in Central America. Outside interest, particularly during the period of John F. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress initiative, helped to stimulate a number of activities, political and military, aimed at reform. The example of the Cuban revolution was, of course, of great concern to Washington, which encouraged local

regimes to mend their ways through a program of economic development, armed forces "civic action" plans, and investment in infrastructure. In connection with these drives for reform — stimulated to a great extent from abroad — were other regional arrangements aiming at industrialization and improved agricultural production for a larger and more prosperous domestic market within a Central American Common Market. The relative success in the 1960s, and to some extent even in the early 1970s, of a number of these schemes, and particularly of the Common Market idea, led at last to some greater distribution of wealth, and thus to some growth in the middle class.

Unfortunately, the "Soccer War" between Honduras and El Salvador in 1969, and a variety of shocks to non-oil-producing Third World states in the mid-1970s, brought a halt and, eventually, a reversal to these favourable trends. Social unrest took an increasingly violent turn, despite the quiescence of Havana after 1968; and, by the late 1970s, insurrection was present in Guatemala and Nicaragua, spreading to El Salvador, and causing spillover effects even in Honduras and Costa Rica.

The fall of the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua in the summer of 1979 led to alarm bells being sounded in the rest of the region, and, needless to say, in Washington. As the new Sandinista reformist government made clear its leftist intentions and began to assist the insurrection in El Salvador, and with the arrival of a conservative administration in the United States, the stage was set both for wide-ranging conflict in the region and for outside intervention. As mentioned above, the early 1980s witnessed heavy fighting in Guatemala and El Salvador, increasing Contra activity from Honduras and even Costa Rica into Nicaragua, and a seemingly unending and bloody insurgency in El Salvador. Thus, no country in the region was spared the impact of war and, with great power intervention in support of all sides, the possibility of a major conflagration, perhaps involving the United States and the Soviet Union, even though remote could not be excluded.

The Central American Peace Process

As the level of conflict grew, and as the involvement of the United States increased in a dramatic fashion, the danger of such a conflict became of concern to chancelleries all over the world. Latin American countries, while no doubt often troubled by the leftist slant of the Managua regime, were even more concerned about the impact of a larger scale conflict or, even worse in their view, of United States direct military intervention in Central America. Related to this, the United States' European allies and Canada were worried about what was seen as yet another "out-of-area" dispute potentially troubling to NATO. While American views on the origin of the crisis in Central America (i.e., it was essentially caused by Soviet and Cuban meddling) were shared to some extent by Great Britain, no other member of the alliance went as far towards accepting Washington's view of

the Central American issue. NATO, having recently recovered from a series of difficult out-of-area questions, as well as thorny problems of weapons modernization, scarcely looked forward to yet another problem threatening its unity. This was particularly true since the accession of Spain to the alliance in 1981, a major political victory for the West, but one soon jeopardized by the victory of the Socialist Party in 1982 and by the strains placed on Spain by its membership during the Falklands war. Madrid felt and continues to feel it speaks on behalf of Latin America, both in NATO and in the European Community.

Thus began a series of attempts on a multilateral basis, as well as on bilateral and even individual bases, to propose some sort of rubric for negotiations for either a global solution to the problems of the Central American crisis, or at least a partial solution between some of the actors involved. Some of these efforts, particularly the joint Franco-Mexican initiative of 1981, were greeted by strong opposition from the United States, and all failed to achieve their objectives in the face of the extreme complexity and seriousness of the issues at stake.

In 1983, representatives of the Latin American countries most likely to be affected by the continuing unrest in the Central American region came together on the island of Contadora in Colombia to try again. Mexico, Panama, Colombia and Venezuela all feared the implications for their own security of a widening war engulfing Central America. Mexico borders on Guatemala, and had been receiving for years large numbers of refugees from that country, and more recently from almost the whole of the region. The negative impact of this on the already strained Mexican social system suggested to the government that a larger scale war to the south could be disastrous for the country even if its military aspects did not spill over the border.

While Colombia, Venezuela and Panama had not yet suffered in this fashion from the wars to their north, their delicate internal situations called loudly for a reasonable level of stability in the whole of the Caribbean region. The Contadora Group, as it came to be known, embarked on a highly active program of diplomacy and informal pressures to involve all the actors on the Central American scene in the search for an over-arching peace settlement. By dint of long, often tedious, and usually frustrating effort, they produced a series of drafts of an eventual peace accord entitled "The Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America." These drafts faced, at times, the opposition of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and, at others, that of some or all of the conservative states — El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and even Costa Rica. Behind the scenes there could frequently be observed the hand of the United States using its very considerable influence when it felt its security interests to be in jeopardy.

Support was, nonetheless, forthcoming at various stages when the process looked stalled, the most dramatic case being in 1985 when four South American countries joined together to form the Contadora Support Group. Conservative as

well, these countries — Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay — felt they could be of real use to the peace initiatives because of their influence in Washington and their weight in the international community at large. Despite the undoubted assistance this group provided Contadora, the peace process decelerated dramatically after the 1986 draft failed to receive acceptance by all five Central American countries. However, political events of late 1986 and early 1987 then rather surprisingly picked up the slack. The winter of 1986-87 saw media attention focussed on the Hasenfus affair (where a CIA supply aircraft was shot down by the Sandinista army), U.S. spy scandals involving Nicaragua, and finally the beginning of the Iran-Contra affair. The resultant weakening of American resolve in its policy in Central America, and the doubts this engendered in the United States' conservative allies in the area, were not long in appearing.

In the summer of 1987, the Central American presidents met at the conference at Esquipulas in Guatemala, and in what has been called the "Second Declaration of Independence" signed the "Procedure for the Establishment of a Firm and Lasting Peace in Central America." This document, usually termed "Esquipulas II," gave a dramatic boost to the peace process, calling as it did for a regionally based resolution of the crisis looking to the five republics themselves to solve their difficulties, while proposing that the important role of overseeing and verification be left in the hands of the Contadora Group. The accord proposed cease-fires between government forces and insurgents, amnesties for the latter once they had given up the path of armed struggle, the establishment of democracy in a pluralist and full sense in all five countries of the region, the setting up of reconciliation commissions at a national level throughout the area, the commencement of national dialogues with opposition groups who eschewed armed force, the termination of aid programs by states outside the region to insurgent groups within it and, finally, an end to the use of national territories for the launching of attacks or other aggressive acts against neighbours.

Perhaps not surprisingly, these lofty objectives were not easily reached. Some countries believed they had no major problems and that, therefore, they needed no national reconciliation commissions, nor any of the rest of the arrangements regarding insurgency and democratization. Those that clearly had such problems to deal with found the implementation of the Esquipulas II Accord a much more difficult undertaking than the mere signing of it. Trumpeted too loudly as the beginning of a resolution of the conflicts in the region, the accord nonetheless had considerable "wind in its sails," and appeared to relaunch the peace process after almost a year's delay. However, a slackening of the wind was perhaps inevitable for the reasons mentioned, and because of the increasingly effective opposition of the United States. In El Salvador, unarmed opposition groups felt they had been side-stepped as the government moved forward in negotiations with the armed opposition of the Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional (FMLN). Nor were these negotiations a success. In Guatemala, the army attempted

as best it could to stymie government initiatives to open real negotiations with that country's rebel groups. Honduras long refused to acknowledge the need for a national reconciliation commission, and continued to ignore publicly the existence of large Contra forces on its soil. Costa Rica obeyed the letter of the law with admirable seriousness, but of course that very fortunate country had been burdened with very few of the root causes of the crisis.

It was, needless to say, Nicaragua that had been asked to make the most serious concessions within the rubric of the accord. The Sandinistas were to allow democratization; give an amnesty to opponents of the regime, including captured Contras; open negotiations with that armed opposition group; and begin a wide-ranging series of talks with the unarmed opposition through a national reconciliation commission.

Despite shortcomings in many areas, the Esquipulas II Accord no doubt did achieve a great deal in opening up political space for manoeuvre among the countries involved in the conflict. Without those accords, progress could not otherwise have been achieved. Looking back on events, it is possible to say that the momentous concessions made by the Ortega government in January and March of 1988, culminating in the signing of the Sapoá Agreement of March 23, could not have been imagined without a context such as that provided by the Esquipulas II framework. This national Nicaraguan solution gave that country a ceasefire — however fragile — and provided at least something of an example to the other states confronting violence at home.

Most important for the purposes of this paper is that verification was considered to be an absolutely essential element of all the peace proposals and accords on the table so far. The absence of trust on the part of the negotiating countries, as well as the extreme reticence of the United States to deal with the Managua regime, forced the verification question to become a *sine qua non* of progress in the talks.

The Contadora process spent much of its time focussing on draft agreements which dealt with the issues related to the verification of political and security matters, and which offered a real guarantee that undetected violations offering significant advantages to one party over the others would be, to all intents and purposes, impossible. Esquipulas II acknowledged the vital nature of these security and political verification requirements, but had left them squarely in the hands of the Contadora Group itself. In the words of one Central American diplomat, "Security and verification matters were the one area where Esquipulas II did not 'Central Americanize' the peace process." Instead, the Contadora Group, the United Nations, the Organization of American States and the Contadora Support group were to work together in providing an International Verification and Follow-Up Commission, which would report on those elements of the accord

needing verification. Such elements were seen as being national dialogues and reconciliation commissions, cease-fires and amnesties, democratization, and security matters related to irregular forces and the support thereof, as well as the issue of improper use of national territory for attacks on neighbours.

Sadly, this verification role was to be short-lived. The first report issued by the CIVS (the Spanish acronym for the Commission) early the next year criticized several of the governments involved with the result that, at the next major meeting of regional heads of government, the CIVS was merely thanked for its efforts and sent on its way. From then on, no verification and follow-up capability remained as backup for the Esquipulas II Accord. The importance of the verification mission, however, remained obvious to all who cared to see. At the Sapoá negotiations, the Secretaries-General of both the UN and the OAS were asked to co-operate, along with key members of the clergy, in establishing verification arrangements related to the ceasefire, amnesty, humanitarian aid, Contra re-incorporation and democratization.

Later moves in the peace process have, of course, involved further rounds of negotiations ending up with the Tesoro Beach agreement of February and the Tela accord of August, 1989. The most important element of these has been the will to finally deal with the Contra problem, particularly in its Honduran expression, and thereby to remove a major stumbling block to an overall negotiated settlement. The U.S.-Nicaragua flare-up at the San José meeting of October 1989, and the disturbance of the cease-fire in Nicaragua, place these and other Central American peace accords in great jeopardy.

Summing up on the peace process, it is fair to say that noteworthy progress has been made, even though that progress is clearly threatened by repeated negative moves by a variety of actors on the Central American scene. The war rages unabated in El Salvador, insurgency is far from dead in Guatemala, and Nicaragua's fragile peace is under great pressure. In this last country, the electoral process is still surviving, the Contras' situation has not improved, there has been greatly increased co-operation with neighboring countries, and the war was brought under control for a year and a half. Unfortunately, the October renewal of fighting, and a new flare-up with President Bush, have damaged the prospects for peace, and all parties will have to move with great care if the process is to be kept on the rails.

Guatemala offers a somewhat different picture. A key player in the peace process through its "active neutrality" and its forceful notwithstanding all this, prove a weak reed. The army is clearly unhappy with the government's professed desire to negotiate with Guatemala's own rebels, and also finds distasteful the idea of neutrality in a conflict pitting left against right in the region as a whole, and in Nicaragua in particular. The Sandinistas are detested by the Guatemalan army,

which makes no secret of its preference for rightist regimes everywhere in Central America. Significant elements of the Guatemalan military are unhappy with both the domestic and international implications of the peace process, and this is heightened by their dissatisfaction with the civilian government's economic record. The military's perception is that it has already been victorious in the campaign against those guerrillas with which the government now wishes to negotiate. Coup attempts in June of 1988 and May of 1989 established this point forcefully. For the moment, Guatemala remains committed to pushing forward the peace process, but the current government's ability to do so is limited.

The situation in El Salvador is completely different. There, the war remains intense, and can only be called "low-intensity conflict" by those who are not living it. With over 70 000 dead, this small country has a wrecked economy and has become totally dependent on American assistance for military and economic survival. The Christian Democratic government in San Salvador has recently been replaced by the extreme right wing party, ARENA, a grouping closely associated with the right-wing of the military, and opposed to the kinds of concessions the insurgents would consider meaningful. Despite a favourable evolution of events at the beginning of 1989, more recently one has seen hard-line attitudes replace what little flexibility had previously emerged in traditionally rigid negotiating postures.

The February 1989 agreements on democratization, and the future of the Contras in particular, have provided some reason for optimism even in the terribly difficult Salvadorean context. The peace process was definitely pushed forward by these accords, but one must be sanguine and note more recent events as well. For example, the United Nations' interest in sending a technical mission to Central America ran up against not only the opposition of Honduras (which had refused to co-operate until such time as Nicaragua withdrew its case against Tegucigalpa before the International Court of Justice), but also against the refusal of the FMLN to guarantee the safety of UN personnel on such a mission in territory under guerrilla control. Here, peace seemed very far away indeed, and the "will-to-peace" equally distant.

Esquipulas II continues, on paper, to be the framework for further negotiations at both heads of government and foreign minister levels. As mentioned, there is some progress in a limited number of areas, but it would be easy to exaggerate its relative significance. Sapoá faces continued right-wing Contra opposition, but its cease-fire features are holding. However, the prospects for the San Salvador agreements are far from certain.

Threat Perceptions

In order to examine the sort of arms control regime that might be applicable and acceptable in the Central American region, and then be in a position to bring out the nature of the verification arrangements required to sustain that arms control regime, it is necessary to understand something of the general threat perceptions in the region.

Threat perception in Central America is the result of a complex interaction of historic, territorial, ideological, cultural, regime stability, national unity and other factors. The Spanish colonial heritage left some borders between what are now the states of Central America, but which were then mere administrative conveniences within the context of the all-encompassing Captaincy-General of Guatemala. The attempt to hold the entire territory of that former colonial administrative unit together in the post-independence world failed, as centrifugal forces related to local political power and the Caudillo tradition split greater Guatemala into the five constituent parts we now know as independent sovereign states.

Borders were then and still remain uncertain in a number of cases involving essentially all five republics. Consequently, these border disputes have led to skirmishes or even open war between neighbours. Complicating the current ideological and social conflict of the 1980s, these border disputes remain constants in the threat perception of several Central American states.

Perhaps even more dramatic has been the tendency of Central American states to intervene in one another's affairs on the basis of either an appeal to the historic unity of the five republics, or even more often on the basis of preferred ideological affiliations. In the last century, for example, conservative and liberal parties almost always backed their counterparts in other regional republics and were quite prepared on occasion to put the military power of the state at the service of these very loose ideologies elsewhere in the region. This tendency was, of course, justified largely on the strength of the appeal of an idea of a "golden age" of overall Central American unity which, it was reckoned, would have wider appeal than any national cry for support.

In addition, regime instability itself has a major role to play in threat perceptions and their development. Armed forces in Central America, as so often elsewhere in the Third World, have in the past been essential props for the sustainment of regimes which may well have had few other pillars on which to rest their stability and their future. This situation has, of course, improved in the late 1980s, although the relationship between armed forces and civilian government in the area is still often fraught with tensions where major issues of national policy are concerned. In many cases, external threat has been virtually unnecessary as a

justification for armed forces, since the latter's main role is really first and foremost the defence of the regime. Public declarations to this effect are, needless to say, rare; hence statements of threat perception tend to emphasize what may well be in fact only low levels of foreign threat, in order to throw a smoke screen over the real reasons for the maintenance of military forces.

Related to all of the above is, of course, the nature and function of the military institution itself. Armed forces planning in all countries tends to be done with a view to "worst-case planning." Hence, it is not surprising that analyses of foreign, and indeed domestic, threats can easily be exaggerated. Moreover, the very strength of the armed forces as the major truly national institution means that their role in government assures these worst-case planning scenarios a level of impact on government policy that would be extremely uncommon in Western democracies.

The nature of Central American society, which in some countries is split according to racial class, and national origin criteria, consistently threatens domestic peace. Vast inequalities in the distribution of wealth and the extraordinary gap between the very few great oligarchic families and the mass of the peasantry living near or below the poverty level (a level of poverty often unimaginable in the developed world) make for great revolutionary potential in society as a whole and provide a fertile breeding ground for subversion, especially from the Left. Indeed, both American and Central American analysts of threat in this region constantly point out that the threat of subversion from Cuba, the Soviet Union, Nicaragua, or some combination of these three states, is much greater than any menace posed by them of direct military intervention against the conservative states of Central America.

Thus, we see a region of unstable regimes in underdeveloped countries, with not necessarily well-structured national governments or even cohesive national societies. In the twentieth-century world of "international anarchy," where the nation state is at least theoretically sovereign, the potential for national governments to have high thresholds of threat perception is very great indeed. If one adds to this the years of domestic unrest and actual warfare experienced over the last decade and more, it is easy to understand why those threat perceptions have been maintained at a high level.

Guatemala

The Guatemalan case is not untypical of that of other states in Central America. The country is populous, poor, lacking in communications infrastructure, divided dramatically by class (between rich and poor), and by "race" (between unabsorbed Indians and the mixed "Ladinos"), and has a history of repression,

instability and even civil war. Guatemala was the first Central American country to feel the wave of unrest occasioned by the Cuban revolution and its export of revolutionary zeal when, in the early 1960s, low-level insurrection began.

Even before this, Guatemala had been at the forefront of leftist reformism in Central America when it was ruled by governments vaguely of this stripe in the years 1945-54. The overthrow of the second of these administrations, that of Jacobo Arbenz in 1954 by forces armed, financed and supported by the United States, left a legacy of bitterness which has not subsided in the intervening years.

Despite the failure of Castro-inspired revolution throughout Latin America in 1967-68, domestic peace in Guatemala was achieved only sporadically, and the insurgency remains active even today. The 1983-84 army victories against the insurgents, while viewed as decisive by the government at the time, have no doubt weakened, but equally doubtless not ended, the guerrilla threat. Thus, the perception in Guatemala City of the short- and long-term threat posed by subversion would be hard to exaggerate.

The Guatemalans have, since the breakup of the confederation of Central America in the late 1830s, dreamt of a reunion of the five republics, and the perception in this largest and most important Central American country is that, as in the past, the obvious leader of such a renewed confederation should be Guatemala. Competition has come, generally speaking, from El Salvador, a state whose coffee wealth and relatively high level of development have made it capable of resisting trends towards Guatemalan local hegemony. Nonetheless, Guatemala's army had remained the largest and, arguably, the best in Central America, and the country had felt quite secure in its relations with its other Central American neighbours until recent years. Civil war in El Salvador, as shown in Appendix C, has led to the growth of the Salvadorean army to some 55 000 men, a figure which means this national army now outstrips that of Guatemala (standing at some 42 000).

Given Guatemala's other neighbours and the military problems they pose for this country, the Salvadorean military growth in the last decade is worrying, and would be accepted with the greatest reluctance by Guatemala on a long-term basis. Of particular concern, of course, is Mexico, a regional power called by Guatemalans the "Colossus of the North," just as Mexicans refer to the United States by the same moniker. Clearly, Mexico's forces entirely outnumber those of Guatemala in all areas of military activity; and, while relations between the two states are generally quite good, they are not without incidents. In this context, Guatemala is particularly concerned by its inability to use "hot pursuit" across the Mexican border when national insurgents cross it to escape army attacks. There is a large number of Guatemalan refugees in Southern Mexico, in regions not far from the border, and there is no doubt among the Guatemalan military that among

Table 1

Guatemalan Threat Perception

Population (millions)	85.4	.172	5.88	4.8
Active personnel	138 000	2 200	55 000[b]	18 700
Army	105 500[a]	1 900	39 000	15 400
Air force	7 000	315	2 000	2 200
Navy	26 000	50	1 000	1 200
Tanks	45	—	12	15
Combat aircraft	103	4	29	27
Transport aircraft	32	2	12	23
Armed helicopters	23	3	59	—
Transport helicopters	—	4	6	39
Patrol craft	103	2	5	13
Major Surface Combatants	3	—	—	—

these groups are many of the insurgents driven out of the country during the victorious campaigns of 1983-84. Thus, Guatemala does not consider the Mexican border as one which is without difficulties.

Belize offers further constraints on Guatemalan military strength and deployment. That country is tiny, with a small population and, for over a century, has been consistently and often stridently claimed by Guatemala as belonging — lock, stock, and barrel — to it. The presence of a British garrison of almost 2 000 personnel requires Guatemala City, for prestige as much as for "negotiation from strength" reasons, to maintain a sizeable garrison in parts of the country bordering on Belize. While recent negotiations with the United Kingdom have led some analysts to suggest that these forces have been reduced in recent months, few doubt these border areas will continue to absorb Guatemalan military attention and resources, especially as they are increasingly used for cocaine growing.

Thus, Guatemalan military sources, heavily imbued with the Doctrine of National Security philosophy, view the domestic and international scenes as full

of menace. While Guatemala's government pursues a policy of active neutrality in the Central American crisis, and wishes to play a key role in the peace process, the armed forces continue to drag their feet about these talks. Nicaragua is viewed as a potential source of subversion; and the prospect of an FMLN victory in El Salvador, it is fair to say, sends shivers up Guatemalan military spines. The prospect of having increasingly to isolate areas of guerrilla strength influxes originating in both Mexico and El Salvador holds little appeal for an army which reckons itself already severely stretched.

El Salvador

It is hardly necessary to point out how pressed the Salvadorean army feels. Criticized quite openly by its American allies and advisors, this historically slow-moving, essentially internal-security force had, until the last decade, no very demanding task to undertake. Consequently, the army has found it almost impossible to reform staffs and fighting units, not to mention logistic and other support services, in a way conducive to victory in high-level operations. As shown in Appendix C, the last decade has witnessed a nearly tenfold increase in armed forces strength, a result of the massive increase in the intensity and levels of operations against rebels.

Headquarters in El Salvador must, of course, look first to the immediate problem of a guerrilla movement occupying a huge percentage of the national territory, one which operates effectively in the countryside and with increasing efficiency and aggressiveness in the cities, including the capital of San Salvador itself. While thus far the rebels have not been able to gain the upper hand in a sufficiently clear way to spell disaster for the government, the regime has nonetheless been unable (despite truly massive American military and economic assistance) to defeat the insurgency decisively. That movement, then, must remain the central focus of any Salvadorean threat assessment. Furthermore, given the apparent unwillingness of the Salvadorean ruling classes to yield any significant concessions at all to the guerrillas, it seems likely that this threat perception is accurate.

Related to the insurgency is the belief, sincerely held among many Salvadorean officers, that some, or indeed a great deal, of the supplies of weaponry and ammunition for the FMLN comes from the Sandinista government in Managua. This drastically complicates Salvadorean military planning by forcing attention not only directly onto the guerrilla threat, but also to the Honduran border in the East and to the strategic Gulf of Fonseca in the Southeast. However, the lack of hard evidence collected by either the Salvadoreans, or, perhaps more importantly, the United States, must lead to some questioning of the real seriousness with which the Salvadoreans approach this question of arms transfers from Nicaragua, and any potential interception thereof.

Table 2

Salvadorean Threat Perception

Population (millions)	4.8	3.5	8.6
Active personnel	18 700	77 000[b]	42 000
Army	15 400	70 000[c]	40 000
Air force	2 200	3 000	850
Navy	1 200	4 000	1 200
Tanks	15	152	10
Combat aircraft	27	9	19
Transport aircraft	23	17	14
Armed helicopters	—	10	6
Transport helicopters	39	41	12
Patrol craft	13	20	8

In a more traditional sense, relations with neighbours continue to concern the Salvadorean military, but in a reduced way as a result of the centrality of the guerrilla threat. El Salvador is concerned by Guatemala's growing military strength. While, as noted, El Salvador's armed forces are now for the first time considerably larger than Guatemala's, the Guatemalan requirement to combat insurgency is a much lesser one than El Salvador's. The two states have frequently fought each other in the past, and questions of prestige remain important as well.

It is, however, the Honduran army which remains the chief long-term focus of Salvadorean international threat perception, if one leaves aside the danger of subversion posed — or thought to be posed — by Nicaragua. As can be seen in Appendix C as well, the Honduran forces have also expanded greatly in recent years, quadrupling in number since the early 1970s. Moreover, those forces have benefited from a staggering level of American assistance, and from large-scale joint exercises with the forces of the regional superpower. Most observers feel that the Honduran army has been simply transformed by the experience, and is now in some senses among the best in Central America. Its armaments have been modernized, its officers and other ranks immeasurably improved in terms of training, morale, pay, privileges and the like. The Hondurans maintain high-performance

jet aircraft, the only air force in Central America to do so, and have a small but modern light armoured force ideally suited for internal security and rapid mobile operations. None of the above pleases San Salvador. The two neighbours have been in conflict before, most recently in the "Soccer War" of 1969, which left a legacy of terrible bitterness. Despite United States insistence on "burying the hatchet," many issues remain unresolved.

While co-operation occurs between the Salvadorean and Honduran armed forces along the border between them, a frontier frequently under the control or near-control of the FMLN, Honduras has insisted on limiting the scope and objectives of such co-operation elsewhere, and has, for example, refused United States requests to carry on with training provided to Salvadorean forces in joint courses earlier this decade. As mentioned, the El Salvadorean army has reason to be less than self-confident, and while vastly superior in terms of manpower to Honduras, remembers well Honduran air superiority and its effects in the 1969 war, and fears any improvement in its neighbour's ground forces.

Honduras

If El Salvador fears to some extent the growth and improvement of the Honduran armed forces, it is obvious that the Hondurans are even more concerned about the truly massive growth of the former's armed forces. In 1969, Honduras had fewer than 5 000 men in its forces, but El Salvador had only about 1 000 more. As mentioned, El Salvador now has some 10 times the figure of 20 years ago, while Honduras has only expanded fourfold its former strength. Also, while Honduras can be proud of its record in the air during the "Soccer War," Salvadorean ground successes more than made up for its reverses in aerial combat, and the war is generally considered to have been won by El Salvador.

Almost as bad, Honduras is forced to consider its Nicaraguan neighbour as another potential enemy, and one with even greater land forces strength than the Salvadoreans. Not only does Nicaragua considerably outnumber Honduras in virtually all areas of military reckoning other than jet fighters, but also its potential as a supporter for subversion in the so far relatively steady (but no doubt rapidly evolving) social situation in Honduras must give Tegucigalpa pause.

There is, then, the question of the Contras. The Honduran press, remarkably free and vociferous in its criticism of the government, likes to point out in a somewhat exaggerated way that the country is actually occupied by five armies at a time. That is, the Contras act as an independent army in an area of Honduras they frequently refer to as "New" or "Little Nicaragua." The Sandinistas appear to Hondurans to enter their country at whim. The United States maintains forces continuously, and exercises large forces frequently, in the country. The territory retained by El Salvador after the 1969 war, but begrudged it by Hondurans,

Table 3

Honduran Threat Perception

Population (millions)	5.88	3.5
Active personnel	55 000[a]	77 000[b]
Army	39 000	70 000[c]
Air force	2 000	3 000
Navy	1 000	4 000
Tanks	12	152
Combat aircraft	29	9
Transport aircraft	12	17
Armed helicopters	59	10
Transport helicopters	6	41
Patrol craft	5	20

includes the presence of both Salvadorean regulars and FMLN troops. Finally, some Hondurans quip that the country is really occupied by its own army as well. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that the Contra presence in the country is regarded with great concern by most of the military. While the extreme right in the armed forces may see some advantages to conflict with Nicaragua and support for anti-leftist forces, most Honduran officers seem to share the view that not only is the Contra presence a national disgrace in that Honduras is shown to be incapable of controlling its own territory, but also the potential for the Contras to place Honduras in an untenable position in the international community, as well as in its relations with neighbouring Nicaragua, cannot fail to trouble military planners. Lastly, where the Contras are concerned, the army realizes that it may well be asked in the post-February 1989 follow-up on the disposal of the Contras to act against them, or at least against their more determined factions, in a military way. Initial moves in this direction occurred in the autumn of 1989.

It is Nicaragua that currently troubles and, at least for the short term, will continue to worry Honduran commanders. Until the March 1988 Sapoá agreements, and the more-or-less successful cease-fires which have followed it, incursions by

Nicaraguan forces, usually in hot pursuit of Contras, had been frequent. Since then, while such incursions no longer occur, relations between the two countries have not really improved that markedly. Nicaragua accuses Honduras of being America's spokesperson, and thereby trying to hamstring the peace process as well as refusing to co-operate in a bilateral framework to bring peace to the border regions and control the activities of the Contras. This last problem in the two countries' relations has led to the famous Nicaraguan case brought before the International Court of Justice, which retains its potential to stymie progress towards peace as well. The poisoned relations between the two countries, while no doubt lessened by the peace negotiations themselves, remain a constant and serve as a backdrop for all Honduran military planning.

Tegucigalpa is particularly concerned about the strength of Nicaraguan armoured forces. These latter, variously reported but probably numbering some 150 T-54 and T-55 tanks (see Table 3), no doubt give Nicaragua by far the most powerful armoured punch in Central America. Honduras views them as both a threat and a provocation, and uses their existence as a justification for suspicions about Managua's behaviour and intentions. Refusing to credit openly the threat of real subversion at home, the Honduran military employ the perceived Nicaraguan menace, as well as that of El Salvador, to explain the need for large-scale forces armed with the best equipment, and trained increasingly efficiently — and ever more closely — in tandem with the United States.

Costa Rica

As is well known, Costa Rica is the shining example of democracy in the region, and perhaps in Latin America as a whole, and is often referred to as "the Switzerland of Central America." While this analogy may be vaguely accurate in the political sphere, it is certainly not in the economic, and could hardly be further from the mark in the military sense. Economically, Costa Rica is relatively well-off by Central American standards, but shares the general Latin American problem of indebtedness and considerable poverty. No doubt middle class in self-image and in behaviour, Costa Rica is nonetheless beset with social worries. Democracy remains strong, and has been remarkably successful in resisting both leftist and rightist calls for more radicalization. However, this could change if the overall economic performance of the country fails to improve.

Militarily, however, Costa Rica is most famous for its abolition of the armed forces in 1948. Unique in the Americas, Costa Rica lives happily without a regular army, contenting itself in recent decades with a very small Civil Guard, whose training was limited, whose armaments were light, and whose tasks rarely included planning for war abroad or for insurgency at home. Destabilization in the 1980s, however, has brought on further militarization of the country, although this trend has been exaggerated frequently by leftist sources. The Civil Guard has

Table 4

Costa Rican Threat Perception

Population (millions)	3.5	2.28
Active personnel	77 000[a]	7 300
Army	70 000[b]	6 000
Air force	3 000	400
Navy	4 000	900
Tanks	152	—
Combat aircraft	9	—
Transport aircraft	17	22
Armed helicopters	10	—
Transport helicopters	41	16
Patrol craft	20	6

been increased, as shown by Appendix C, and there has been a counter-insurgency unit (the Relámpago Batallion) formed, but the country continues to be moderate and helpful with the peace process, as witness the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to President Oscar Arias.

The unfortunate fact of life, however, is that the abolition of the army has led frequently to heightened fears of invasion over the last four decades. The Nicaraguan dictatorship of the Somozás was often accused, sometimes with justification, of plotting to invade the country. Since 1979, the military build-up in Sandinista Nicaragua has occasioned widespread fear in Costa Rica as to outright invasion or, at least, a generally disruptive policy slant on the part of Managua. Costa Ricans are essentially conservative people, anxious to maintain their way of life, and the revolutionary experiment across the border has not had either a good press or a sympathetic ear in the country. Costa Rica feels itself exposed and all but totally disarmed in this context, and is distinctly nervous as a result. Opinion polls show, nonetheless, the strength of anti-militarist sentiment by rejecting overwhelmingly the right's proposal of a return to armed status as a country, but there

is no doubt that this unarmed nation feels far from secure, especially when one adds the highly volatile situation it faces with its other, non-Central American neighbour, Panama.

Nicaragua

Managua's perception of the threats it faces is the result of an extraordinary range of potential enemies reflecting the unique position of this country as the only dramatically leftist-leaning regime on the continent of the Americas. Cuba had, of course, its revolution some 30 years ago, and had faced, as its leftist bent became more evident, the enmity of not only the United States, but of all the conservative regimes in Latin America. Few even of the moderate regimes were willing to risk Washington's ire merely for the sake of Fidel Castro's favour. Cuba, however, is an island, and is able to benefit from that status in a number of ways. At the same time, the island is separated from the continent as a whole, and therefore can be isolated more easily by American naval and air power.

The United States has learned to live with the Cuban regime, a process which has caused great discomfort in the regional superpower and an outcome which it has been willing to accept only with great reluctance. The evolution of Nicaragua's strategic context cannot be seen outside the context of Cuban-United States relations, as has been mentioned more than once. The objectives of the most recent years of American foreign policy have been summed up as "No more Cubas; no more Vietnams." This, of course, expresses America's determination to see no further "communist" advances in the Western hemisphere, but cautions that it is unwilling to stop such advances on these shores or off them if the only way to do so is through the indefinite, long-term, large-scale involvement of American land forces.

The Sandinista victory in the summer of 1979 signalled a new challenge to American hegemony in the Caribbean and Central American region, and was soon met by determined opposition on Washington's part. This opposition is the crucial framework for all Sandinista foreign and defence policy, and is the key determinant of Managua's relations with the world as a whole. Following its own inclinations, as well as Cuban and Soviet advice, the FSLN regime has worked hard to avoid excessive annoyance to the United States, although certain errors in this regard have been made.

Be that as it may, Nicaragua faces the greatest power in the world, a power clearly antagonistic, not only to the Sandinistas' reform program and links with the Eastern Bloc, but to the very existence of the revolutionary regime emergent from the civil war. Given the United States government's attitude, the FSLN leadership takes the threat of actual invasion from the United States very seriously.

Table 5

Nicaraguan Threat Perception

Population	8.6	85.4	.172	5.88	4.8	18.3	245
Active personnel	42 000	138 000	2 200	55 000[c]	18 700	180 500	2 163 000
Army	40 000	105 500	1 900	39 000	15 400	145 000[d]	776 000
Air force	850	7 000	315	2 000	2 200	22 000	603 000
Navy	1 200	26 000	50	1 000	1 200	13 500	585 000
Tanks	10	45	—	12	15	1 160	15 800
Combat aircraft	19	103	4	29	27	176	3 583
Transport aircraft	14	32	2	12	23	66	937
Armed helicopters	6	23	3	59	—	44	2 576
Transport helicopters	12	—	4	6	39	10	6 522
Patrol craft	8	103	2	5	13	58	n.a.
Major surface combatants	—	3	—	—	—	3	230
Submarines	—	—	—	—	—	3	137

The United States has in the Central American region the allies, the bases and the influence to keep Nicaragua on its toes, and more than a little edgy about the danger of invasion. The disapproval by all neighbouring governments of the FSLN regime, and the close relations of those republics with the United States, have resulted in a threat analysis which is extremely gloomy, and which has called for the mobilization of what is essentially the whole of national resources in defence of the revolution. Original plans for a small army after 1979, reflected in Appendix C, have been shelved both in this context of superpower enmity, and in that created by the existence of the Contras, a force at least supported (if not created) by the United States.

Thus Nicaragua faces, without considering its traditional rivalries with its neighbours, two quite distinct threats. The first involves the danger, always present, that an increasingly exasperated government in Washington will opt for a military solution to what it perceives as the Sandinista menace in Central America. The second is that posed by irregular forces, at first both in Costa Rica and in Honduras, but in more recent years only in the latter.

This military situation has required the preparation of two distinct operational concepts for the Sandinista Army. The American invasion, if it were to come, would call for large, well-equipped and mobile armoured forces spread widely throughout the country. The Contras, on the other hand, can only be defeated by highly efficient, virtually regular formations specialized in counter-insurgency, light in equipment, and extremely mobile, but not necessarily in large numbers.

We see, then, in Nicaragua, two armies. One aims to defeat — or, better still, deter — invasion through its capability to meet enemy thrusts either on the beach-heads or the drop zones leading to the key centres and airports of the country. This force is largely based on the reserves and armoured units, and could also be used against movements by the U.S. or its allies across the borders into Nicaragua by road. The second is made up of well-trained counter-insurgency battalions and their supporting units, and these are, of course, operational in the field, and have been for some years.

Closely tied to this dismal picture is the threat posed by CONDECA, the grouping of conservative states which, since the 1960s, has at least officially been united in its opposition to any "communist" gains in the Central American region. As can be observed from Table 5, this combination of the armed forces of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador adds another dimension of concern to military planners in Managua. These staff officers face a bewildering array of potential enemies almost everywhere in the region, and very few sources of hope for assistance. No one in Managua seriously believes that Cuba, much less the Soviet Union, would assist them in any significant military way in the case of either a CONDECA attack, a U.S. invasion, or rather more likely, a combination of the two.

Others

The frequency with which the United States and Cuba appear in discussions of threat perception in Central America focuses attention on the role, real or potential, of those countries in this area. Before leaving a discussion on threat perception, then, a word should be said about these two countries' views on this matter.

Cuba is well experienced in the difficulties of survival alone — or virtually alone — in the face of the opposition of the close and overwhelming power of the United States. After its short-lived and spectacularly unsuccessful attempt to export revolution in the 1960s, Cuban behaviour has settled down (at least in Central America) to a pattern of circumspection and moderation. This moderation and acceptance of the realities of its geostrategic position Cuba now exports to the rest of the region. Both the FSLN in power, and the FMLN well out of it, receive clear guidance from Havana that extremism and direct confrontation with the United States can only lead to disaster. Despite the conservative inclinations of

Table 6

United States Threat Perception

Population	3.5	8.6	85.4	.172	5.88	4.8	10.3
Active personnel	77 000[a]	42 000	138 000	2 200	55 000[a]	18 700	180 500
Army	70 000[b]	40 000	105 500	1 900	39 000	15 400	145 000[d]
Air force	3 000	850	7 000	315	2 000	2 200	22 000
Navy	4 000	1 200	26 000	50	1 000	1 200	13 500
Tanks	152	10	45	—	12	15	1 180
Combat aircraft	9	19	103	4	29	27	176
Transport aircraft	17	14	32	2	12	23	86
Armed helicopters	10	6	23	3	59	—	44
Transport helicopters	41	12	—	4	6	39	10
Patrol craft	20	8	103	2	5	13	58
Major surface combatants	—	—	3	—	—	—	3
Submarines	—	—	—	—	—	—	3

accords such as Esquipulas II, or indeed the Contadora process, Cuba has endorsed such documents as being the best means of making progress in the region.

While Havana is obviously happy that there is another socialist regime in the area, Castro clearly feels that the survival of his regime comes first, and its revolutionary vigour only second. Cuba's threat perception, then, remains that of an island obviously seen as a hindrance to the superpower sitting less than 150 km from its shore. Havana wishes to deter the United States from any temptation to invade through a defence policy of total national mobilization for territorial defence. This message has not been lost on Nicaragua either.

The United States also may speak of threat perception when it looks south to the Caribbean region. The importance of the Panama Canal and the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico sea lanes is difficult to exaggerate (although some American authors do just that). Communications with Europe, especially in time of war where the Gulf's ports and the Canal would be vital for reinforcement and flexibility, could indeed be hindered by the deployment of significant resources to Caribbean waters. United States access to several key mineral resources is somewhat dependent on these sea lanes as well.[1]

Washington feels, then, that there is a potential wartime danger in the Soviet Union's access to allies in this crucial zone, as well as an actual peacetime danger posed by communist subversion based in Havana and Managua, and spreading out to the rest of the Caribbean region. Thus, the United States responds, in its view, to communist aggression and does so through the stationing of troops in the Canal Zone, in Honduras, in Guantánamo and in Puerto Rico. It also maintains a wide range of logistics and communications facilities in a number of other countries there, and conducts a vast training program directed at regional armed forces.

Revised Threat Perceptions

If one is to achieve peace in Central America, it is essential to change the worst-case scenarios and long-term crisis contexts discussed in the previous chapter. Many factors work against such change, as we have clearly seen. However, there are at least potential factors that could help reduce threat perception, and assist in the creation of confidence-building measures underpinning an arms control regime.

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight those elements of the present military and political equations in Central America which give some scope for revision of previously held views of domestic and foreign threat.

Terrain

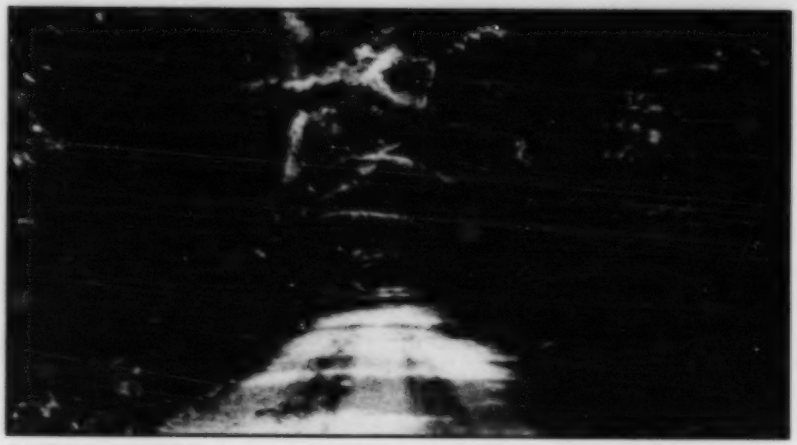
As any physical map of Central America shows, the five republics are dominated by terrain features that most military observers would clearly see as assisting the defence. It is, of course, difficult to say such a thing without analyzing a specific military context. Nevertheless, in conventional military thinking, broken terrain, dense forests and jungles, mountains and swamps, as well as wide and active rivers, favour the defence over the offence.

These terrain features pose considerable difficulty to extensive offensive operations, in terms of concentration of forces, achievement of surprise, maintenance of communications and supplies, and a host of other determinants. Routes that can handle heavy military traffic are few and far between. Where they exist at all, they tend to be narrow, often in poor repair, or unlikely to survive significant levels of use.

In most threat perceptions held by state and military personnel, the idea of surprise attack has a primary role to play. This is, of course, evident in analyses related to Central Europe and the Middle East. The reason is obvious and simple: the advantage of surprise is that the aggressor has the choice of when, how and where to attack. In Central America, as should be clear from the above, none of this is easy if one is thinking of a large, decisive blow. In past wars, from the 1820s up to 1969, the ability of Central American armies has been greatly limited where the projection of their strength deep into enemy territory was concerned.[2] Even today, one of the main criticisms U.S. officers make of the Salvadorean army is that it, like those of its neighbours, has very little sustainable mobility over long distances.

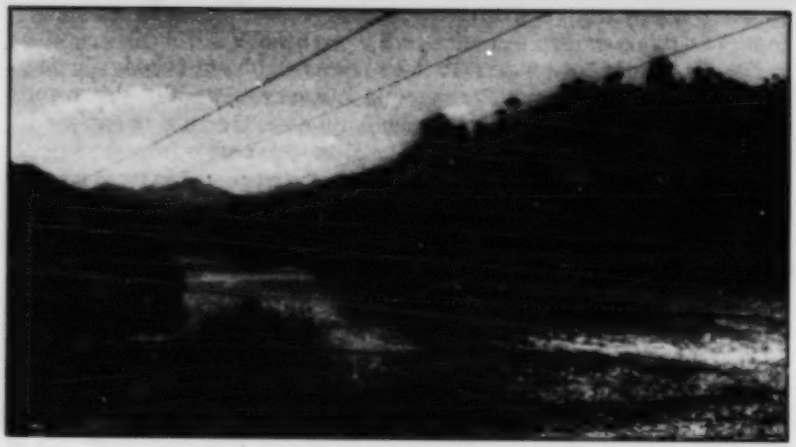
While it is true that distances by air in Central America are not particularly great, it is also true that the air forces — with the exception of that of Honduras — are woefully ill-equipped for significant raids and bombing of enemy targets outside their own territories. By land, travel is much more difficult and distances

Figure 1 How Terrain in Central America Favours Defensive Military Operations



Roads in Central America tend to be few and far between. Frequently, forest or jungle dominates the terrain on both sides. This makes for relative ease of defence against armoured vehicles or soft-skinned transport.

Possibilities for ease of ambush, and opportunities for enfilade and defilade fire, make for great difficulties in pushing forward rapidly with invading columns of forces. This reinforces the defensive potential of Central American countries.



Rivers and streams, often with steep banks, are very numerous in Central America and would provide many a check on advancing forces, particularly motorized ones. Bridges capable of handling heavy armour or large-scale columns are few. Obstacles formed by water can therefore be taken as another reason why defensive capabilities of Central American states may be considered greater than they first appear.

Mountain, forest and jungle provide almost ubiquitous obstacles for sophisticated armed forces deployments in much of Central America. Historically such features have provided a major brake on the offensive capabilities of Central American armed forces and would likely do so in the future.

are, of course, much greater. This reality applies particularly to consideration of the distances between key bases in one country and key target areas in a potential enemy's territory.

Thus, planning for a major attack on one's neighbours is bedevilled by serious operational constraints. For example, it is very easy with modern anti-tank weapons to delay — or indeed, halt — an offensive based on one or two roads. The terrain features mentioned above merely heighten this problem for the aggressor, in that ambushes in enfilade and defilade are easily organized in most parts of the region, and the weapons to make such ambushes effective are either already well supplied or could soon be so in all of the armies of the area, with the possible exception of Costa Rica.

Offensive Versus Defensive Weapons

The debate as to what constitutes an offensive or defensive weapon is a very old one in military circles. The concept itself has been much debated in the context of the myriad arms control and disarmament negotiations since the Hague Conference of 1907 — if not before. In general, one refers to the weapons of one's enemy (or rival) as offensive, while referring to one's own as quintessentially defensive. It is nonetheless true that in the Central American context, the distinction could prove useful, especially if it is extended not only to weapons systems, but to forces as a whole, and to force postures and deployments.

More and more frequently one sees the term "non-provocative defence" touted as a possible means to improve the confidence of a potential enemy that another holds no aggressive intent towards him. While this idea may offer limited utility at the moment in Central Europe (although this also is arguable), it may well prove helpful in Central America. Weapons mixes can be contemplated which would reinforce the terrain features' negative effects on the potential for offensive operations. Given the relative weakness of Central American forces where extra-national projection of power is concerned, defensive stances could conceivably be reinforced at the expense of offensive potential.

The key would be to discover what offensive/defensive mix of forces and weapons systems would strengthen one country's defensive potential, without weakening that of another. This will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Political Factors

It is stating the obvious to say that political factors in Central America could have an enormous bearing on the revision of current threat perceptions. In the view of most observers, the negotiations so far on the peace process have had a very salutary effect on these perceptions. It must also be admitted, however, that this has not yet led to exceptionally concrete results.

Outside powers could have a marked influence on revising threat perceptions, either through, in the case of the United States, taking a more positive view of the evolution of events in the region; or, in the case of Cuba, making clear that excessive guerrilla intransigence about the peace negotiations could cost those movements a good deal of their support from Havana. Managua would face an entirely different set of circumstances if either the U.S. or the Contra threat were reduced or eliminated, and it has so far shown that it is willing to yield on almost any United States security-related demand to achieve one or both of these results. Despite the FMLN's considerable ability to sustain a great deal of its war effort, an end or major reduction to Cuban assistance, moral and other support would be a great blow to that grouping of disparate insurgent forces.

In addition, superpower guarantees to states that perceive themselves as being threatened by more powerful enemies could be an enormous source of security for those states. One thinks of the CONDECA republics and especially of Costa Rica in this regard. A United States restated assurance that a Nicaraguan attack on an essentially defenceless Costa Rica would automatically bring the United States to Costa Rica's defence would surely be the most effective guarantee imaginable that Managua would never be tempted to embark on such an adventure, and that even if it were to do so, it would be quickly dissuaded from carrying on with the aggression. It is perhaps worth mentioning here that this would indeed be only a restatement of a guarantee many feel inherent in any case in this bilateral relationship, given the fact that both Costa Rica and the United States have signed the Rio Pact and the Charter of the Organization of American States.

Similar reassurances given to other regional powers could also assist them in producing analyses of their strategic situations which were less dominated by threat. Honduras might benefit as much as Costa Rica from such a guarantee. A Soviet "guarantee" to Nicaragua would, of course, be highly provocative, but no one in Moscow has shown the slightest inclination to advance such an idea.

The peace accords are themselves political statements aimed at reassuring the republics involved as to the peaceful intentions of their neighbours. The whole range of security matters discussed in these negotiations, and particularly in the Contadora draft acts, aim at creating confidence-building measures and, indeed, an arms control regime which, by being verifiable, can hope to contribute to a real reduction in the perception of threat.

Figure 2 Threat Perceptions in the Central American Region

Source: Derived from International Institute for Strategic Studies, Military Bal

nce, *1988-89, (London, 1988).*

A Possible Arms Control Regime

The previous discussion of threat perceptions and other factors have provided a starting point for the debate of what might constitute an acceptable arms control regime for Central America. As mentioned in the introduction to this paper, one can assume that this arms control regime would find its place in a general peace accord, which would preferably have the insurgents' acceptance but, if not, would somehow see the insurgent movements eliminated from an active role. Another assumption is that the essential security matters already covered in the last Contadora Draft Act would be retained.

What might such an arms control regime look like? For one thing, the Contadora Draft Act, as well as academic and diplomatic papers on the subject of an arms control regime in Central America, highlight the need for a system of assigning values to various military establishments and weapons systems in order to decide on appropriate reductions on the part of the various states signing an accord, and to decide what will be subject to regulation. In agreeing on such a table of values, consideration would be given to:

- security needs and defence capacity of every Central American state;
- extent of the territory and population;
- range and characteristics of its borders;
- military expenditure in relation to gross domestic product (GDP);
- military budget in relation to public expenditures and social indicators;
- military technology, relative combat capability, troops, quality and quantity of installations and military assets;
- armament subject to control and armament subject to reduction; and
- the foreign military presence and foreign military advisers in each Central American state.

Here the intention is not to provide such a table but merely to look at the general trend of reductions and modifications. This general approach should provide guidelines for an eventual, more detailed, analysis.

Guatemala

It is perhaps appropriate to begin by looking at the country that has suffered the most and the longest from disorder, violence and insurgency. In order to address legitimate defence concerns on the part of Guatemala, it is possible to imagine a situation that looks something like this:

- a reduced army, the reduction of which is in line with reductions in the strength of that of El Salvador as well;
- an air force at the same level as today, and in line with that of El Salvador; and
- no increase in numbers of foreign advisers.

United States diplomats and military observers have commented that the Guatemalan armed forces could live with some significant numeric cuts. Nonetheless, even optimists think that for reasons of institutional cohesion and perceived national role, such reductions could not bring the armed forces below 33 000 men. This, however, could well give sufficient room for a major positive response from external rivals, without necessarily weakening the Guatemalan government's ability to deal with a renewed internal threat.

Honduras

This most exposed of Central America's countries in the current crisis might imagine a defence posture and strategic situation with the following modifications:

- an increase in the anti-armour capability of the land forces;
- an increase in the sapper capabilities of the land forces (at the moment, there is only one engineer batallion);
- a reduction in foreign military advisers;
- a reduction in foreign military personnel stationed in the country;
- a retention of the same size and quality of air forces;
- a pull-back from Honduran borders by both Nicaragua and El Salvador; and
- a major reduction or even elimation of exercises and training involving foreign troops.

Both expansion and modernization of the Honduran armed forces are recent phenomena, and the army as an institution would be most reluctant to see cuts which threatened its prestige, its promotion patterns for officers, its perceived ability to defend the country or smash eventual guerrilla movements, or its role as final arbiter in national decision-making on matters it considers vital. It is not impossible, however, that the restructuring outlined above could be undertaken without excessive disruptions related to these concerns.

El Salvador

This country offers the greatest challenge since it poses the most complicated and numerous difficulties in almost all the areas of concern that have so far been discussed in this paper. The following situation might prevail:

- an increase in the anti-armour capabilities of the land forces;
- an increase in the anti-aircraft capabilities of the land forces;
- the retention of the same level of air forces;
- a reduction in foreign advisers;
- a reduction in the army in line with that in Guatemala; and
- a pullback from the Honduran frontier.

Salvadorean authorities, particularly its military ones, will for some considerable time be loathe to reduce their counterinsurgency capabilities, or, indeed, their overall strength beyond limited cuts. Nonetheless, the above changes to, and retained features of, Salvadorean force posture might be acceptable.

Nicaragua

It has been shown that the Nicaraguan strategic picture is complicated by two domestic threats, each of which, however, is quite distinct from the other. The United States threat requires one kind of army, while the Contra menace coming across the border from neighbouring Honduras requires quite another. The Nicaraguan revised circumstances might include the following features:

- a large reserve army;
- a reduced regular army;
- the same level of air forces;

- a strengthening of anti-aircraft capabilities;
- an acceptance of no jet aircraft in the inventory;
- a significant but not massive reduction in armoured forces (particularly tanks);
- a major reduction in, or elimination of, foreign advisers;
- a pullback from the Honduran and Costa Rican borders; and
- wide-ranging border control arrangements with both these countries.

This force posture could leave a considerable deterrent effect in place where the United States invasion possibility is concerned, while significantly reducing the offensive capability of Nicaragua with respect to its neighbours. Forces adequate to deal with armed internal groups would still be available, but overpowering regular strength would be a thing of the past, and might be perceived as such by those abroad formerly fearful of it.

Costa Rica

It might be argued that nothing should be done to this country, already disarmed and displaying some national paranoia when its neighbours' military potential is discussed. This analysis does not share that view, and would propose the following modifications:

- an increase in the sapper capabilities of the Civil Guard (at the moment, there are no army engineers as such);
- the retention of the current strength of the Civil Guard;
- a slight increase in light anti-armour weaponry for the Civil Guard; and
- border control arrangements with Nicaragua.

Ideally, this force posture would be underpinned by the U.S. guarantee mentioned in the discussion of political factors making for revised threat perception. In any case, this structure, combined with the changes mentioned in Nicaragua's armed forces, could not fail to produce a lesser degree of insecurity in San José.

What Would Be Verified?

As has already been mentioned, verification aspects of any accord aiming at peace in Central America have been vital in the perceptions of key players in the region over the last decade. The United States, through its own public declarations and private interventions, has made clear that its distrust of both the sincerity and the intentions of the Sandinista regime imposes a requirement for the tightest of safeguards on future Nicaraguan behaviour. This is, of course, particularly the case where matters discussed in the negotiations to date have focussed on security issues.

This United States insistence has been echoed in the views and negotiating postures of a variety of states, but particularly in those of Honduras and El Salvador. These two countries have consistently demanded a verification regime to back up the commitments made by the Nicaraguans in both the Contadora and Esquipulas II draft agreements. This stance has led to accusations from other parties that the United States, Honduras and El Salvador have simply been using the verification prerequisite as a means to delay progress on a peace settlement, and to gain time for other pressures to work in bringing about an unfavourable situation for the Managua regime. While there may be some truth in this assertion, it in no way changes the basic fact that all countries in the region and outside of it, as has been seen, are victims of mutual distrust, and that therefore an unverifiable arms control agreement would simply not be worth the paper on which it was printed.

It is, nonetheless, necessary to point out that the implications of verification — and especially those of a verification regime which would truly act to build confidence among regional and extra-regional actors — are wide-ranging and extremely important. The five republics had until recently generally shown little interest in discussions of either the framework for, or the resources needed in, such a verification arrangement. More than once, officials of international organizations and interested national staffs have been frustrated by the lack of urgency and understanding on the part of Central Americans where verification of agreements is concerned. There has been an assumption in the five local capitals that once an agreement was in some way worked out, a verification regime to back it up would simply fall naturally into place.

The Contadora negotiations, involving the leadership of countries with perhaps more experience in international affairs, and certainly more United Nations and peacekeeping background, dealt with the verification issue as a serious subject, and a *sine qua non* for progress towards peace. The draft acts gave high priority to a verification regime that would reassure all parties to a general peace agreement of the compliance of other signatories.

Within the rubric of verification discussions in the negotiations to date, a requirement has been seen for both political and military verification. This is naturally a result of the highly ambitious objectives of Esquipulas II, which aimed not only at confirming the security arrangement proposals already agreed to in the last Contadora acts, but also at effecting dramatic political change with a view to furthering democratization in the region, and thereby attracting guerrilla groups into a peaceful national dialogue. Without going into the details of such political arrangements, it is worth noting here that one such arrangement envisaged assistance in verifying the work of national reconciliation commissions, progress on human rights agreements, the holding of fair elections, and accords dealing with control, treatment and resettlement of refugees.

In security terms, as mentioned by this author in a previous paper,[3] there would be a requirement for the verification and monitoring of a wide range of agreed activities at governmental, military headquarters and field levels. A research and documentation capability and the provision of an infrastructure would also need to be addressed.

For the purposes of this paper, however, the emphasis will be placed more on the force structure modifications and confirmations discussed in the previous chapter, although not forgetting the wider context of any arms control regime. A whole array of purely security matters would have to be verified in order for the arms control regime agreed upon not to fall into disrepute in the eyes of one or more parties to the accord.

Perhaps the most necessary of the elements of an agreement to be verified would be that related to actual troop reductions. It is, after all, Nicaragua's seeming superiority in mobilized and mobilizable manpower that is the source of much concern in San José, Tegucigalpa and San Salvador. It is also San Salvador's numerical strength that causes concern in Tegucigalpa and Guatemala City. Here one is discussing quite significant numerical reductions in some cases. Given the spread of military forces throughout the countries involved, and given also the problem of determining strengths and deployments of any Third World army, one would be wise to be wary of considering this particular task an easy one.

While not strictly speaking a matter of force reductions, the verification of Nicaraguan reserve forces which, under the scheme discussed, would be maintained at a high level or conceivably even increased (depending on the outcome of negotiations), adds further difficulties. The experience of Grenada and of the United States' accusations of excessive Cuban military involvement in Nicaragua itself suggest that the reserve forces issue can be a very sticky one indeed. The question is, and has been, when is a reservist a soldier, and when a civilian? To avoid future recriminations on this issue, especially if Nicaragua's defence

is to become proportionally more dependent on reserve forces than it is today, negotiations on this matter and clear definitions of relevant terminology must be found before arrangements can be set in concrete.

Equipment reductions offer a potentially thornier problem still. It is probable that major equipment types such as tanks, other armoured vehicles, and aircraft would be relatively easy to monitor both in terms of their movement and of their concentration or control. The same would not necessarily be the case when considering smaller, and perhaps more sophisticated and high-technology weapons systems. As was seen in the previous chapter, aircraft and tanks in some cases would be reduced in numbers. Given the nature of these weapons in the relatively unadvanced military context of Central America, these reductions would be a centrepiece of the verification scheme, as they would be of the overall arms control regime.

Reductions, though, are not the only side of the coin. Several of the proposals suggest increases in weapons or equipment. These include engineering equipment in some countries, anti-aircraft weapons in others and anti-armour equipment in most armed forces of the region. Purchases will be made and deliveries effected of anti-aircraft and anti-tank weapons, and of military engineering equipment. These commercial transactions would have to be monitored with considerable care if accusations as to the size of such orders are to be avoided.

The departure of advisers would also offer some difficulties for those involved in verification of the accords. Much acrimonious debate has already taken place about who is a "military adviser." Countries with conscription have difficulty sending advisers of any kind to receiver nations without being accused of adding a military dimension to this assistance. Cuba, for example, with its perception of a need for total national mobilization in order to deter an American attack on the island, has few young people available for technical assistance of any kind overseas who could not be accused by distrustful governments of being, in some sense, "military." On the other hand, one must avoid the naiveté inherent in suggesting that there is no military factor at all in the dispatch of such personnel to nations of security concern to the dispatching country.

It is also necessary to point out that the United States' advisory role in Central America dates back in formal terms at least half a century and, given former interventions in the region, many more years than that. It is a long-standing fact of Central American military life that the United States holds a counselling role in the area. As the regional superpower, and as the undoubted beneficiary of a type of sphere-of-influence relationship, the United States has some justification for feeling that the mere departure of Soviet, Warsaw Pact, or Cuban military advisers from Nicaragua should not necessarily entail a reciprocal dismantling of Washington's whole aid and adviser apparatus in the other four republics.

All the above aspects of the departure of advisers could produce difficulties for verification. Cubans, as well as United States military personnel of Hispanic-origin, could be quite easily hidden from discovery by the verifying agency. One major factor operating against any country attempting to "cheat" in this way would, however, be the fact that discovery by an efficient verification team would occasion great embarrassment to both the host country and the authorities in the nation from which the advisers came. Assuming that neither side wished to be seen to scuttle the peace process, this spectre of embarrassment might well be a sufficient deterrent.

The acceptance of an arms control regime that requires a reduction in the strength of national armies — and therefore, at least in the short run, some nervousness among national military staffs — will depend on the careful handling of a number of other security aspects of the peace accords. This could include manoeuvres, border control, the deployment of weapons and equipment, pullbacks from borders, and the "no intimidation" provision.

The verifying of national and international manoeuvres which would be either limited, or in the latter case forbidden in some circumstances, obviously becomes a more vital task when countries feel they have voluntarily reduced their own capacity to defend themselves. In accordance with what are likely to be the key agreements in which the arms control regime will find its place, close watch will have to be kept to ensure that notification of the time, place, scope and composition of such manoeuvres was properly effected. While this would be particularly true where extra-regional forces were involved, it would also be generally necessary if confidence in the arms control regime and its efficient verification were to grow.

Border control has been at the heart both of the deteriorating levels of mutual confidence in the region, and of the negotiations to reverse this trend. On all counts, the importance of border control can simply not be exaggerated. Referring to Esquipulas II and to Contadora, no progress can be made unless border control arrangements are established that allow for a halt to the improper use of national territories against neighbouring states, the transfer of weapons to insurgent groups across national frontiers, and the overall support given to irregular groups aiming at the overthrow of legitimate government in other republics. In addition to these strictly security concerns, without effective border control, solutions to refugee difficulties related to accords on general peace in the region may also be hamstrung.

Verification of the deployment of equipment and weapons, especially in the context of the changes foreseen, will also be important in building confidence. The range of Nicaraguan armour, for example, is quite great (the range of the

T-54/55 along paved roads under ideal circumstances exceeds 400 km), although the lack of tank transporters, to save on track wear, reduces the impact of this mobility. Hence, the placement of the basing facilities for such armoured forces could have either a salutary or damaging effect on the confidence of Managua's neighbours. Given the deterrent role the PSLN sees the tanks performing vis-à-vis a United States seaborne or airborne invasion, the basing of this armour near the capital and far, therefore, from neighbouring countries, could act as a confidence-building measure seen in the largest sense of the term. A lack of mobile bridge-building equipment in a Nicaraguan context could be seen in the same light.

Defensive stocks in the overall force posture would also be carefully analyzed by suspicious neighbors because of the offensive/defensive conundrum expressed above. The deployment of sappers by Honduras, unsupported by clearly offensive weapon and equipment types, could reinforce Nicaragua's sense as to the peaceful intentions of Tegucigalpa.

All of the above would be favourably affected by a negotiated agreement relating to a pullback of forces from the borders. In some cases, this pullback could be reinforced, if needed, by the introduction of an interposed body of troops acting as a buffer force/observer mission, although it must immediately be stressed that in the Central American context this could require a very large number of troops working with the verification and peace-keeping organization. Be that as it may, a pullback of forces to some distance from the border, if it did not involve leaving that zone in the hands of potential disturbers of the peace accord (such as still-disaffected insurgents), could add greatly to the sense of security of governments on both sides of the frontier. Central American forces, as noted, would not find it easy to concentrate a major punch and deliver it over considerable distances and often highly difficult terrain. The governments and military staffs of the region, after almost a century and three-quarters of experience, are well aware of their limitations in this regard. Thus, such a pullback to a moderate distance — if seen by eyes accustomed to the European situation — might seem less than impressive. But to the Central Americans who feel exposed to potential attack, such voluntary withdrawal could be very helpful indeed.

A subtle but equally important requirement would be the assurance that activities of a military nature appeared not to be intimidating to neighbouring countries. Nicaragua and Costa Rica have been particularly nervous in the past over troop movements, equipment purchases, international exercises, and even simple political statements in adjacent countries. Given Nicaragua's relations with the United States, and Costa Rica's virtually unarmed status, not to mention the general reduction in military strength envisaged for the area as a whole, it will be important that the intention to refrain from being intimidating with respect to one's former adversaries is not only the case, but is seen to be so.

Lastly, while this paper is not strictly addressing the political aspects of a peace accord, one "political" feature cannot be ignored. This concerns subversion. If much of the talk about threat perception must necessarily deal with a conventional menace, the fact of Central American life is that for the extant regimes, the issue of subversion is at least equally foremost in their minds, and frequently much more of a nightmare, than is the danger of conventional attack from abroad.

Central American regimes tend, of course, to be highly insecure and unstable. As mentioned, their armies have been just as much directed at domestic as at foreign threats since their modern organization at the turn of the last century. El Salvador's tensions with Nicaragua are only vaguely related to a danger of conventional attack, but are most assuredly connected with San Salvador's perception of Managua as determined to assist in the overthrow of the Salvadorean state. Nicaragua's relations with Honduras are poisoned not so much by Tegucigalpa's fear of the growth of the Nicaraguan army (although that is naturally a concern while Managua's intentions are felt to be hostile), but rather by Nicaragua's annoyance at Honduras' persistent unwillingness to do anything to curb Contra activities in the latter country, and by Managua's conclusion that such unwillingness reflects Honduran effective support for the Contras' aims.

An arms control regime must include elements able to verify that countries of the region are not supporting, or even simply "turning a blind eye" to, the activities of insurgent groups aiming at the overthrow of governments party to the agreement setting up that arms control regime. This role of the eventual verification agency, will be key, and perhaps the task which most contributes to a real sense of security on the part of neighbouring capitals. Unfortunately, this role is also potentially the most delicate and demanding of all the jobs to be done by a verification agency.

The "How" of Verification

All observers would now agree with Jozef Goldblat and Victor Millan that the draft Contadora Act was already "the most comprehensive multilateral regional arms control document ever submitted for international consideration."[4] Esquipulas II, Sapoá, the Salvador February 1989, and the Tela agreements have only added to the complexity and comprehensiveness of the objectives set forth in overall peace plans for Central America. There is, of course, no such single document in existence as yet; there are only the different sets of negotiations, some of which have been accepted in principle only, and some of which have been signed and ratified. As seen before, discussions of a verification regime set in place to underwrite an overall arms control regime — which is itself established to support a peace settlement — are fraught with difficulty, as planners try to turn from general concepts to specific details.

Therefore, the question of how to verify the compliance of parties with a peace accord which contains commitments related to an arms control regime is, perhaps, the most difficult issue of all to address in such a paper as this. The attempt made here is far from a final word, as it works within the very considerable constraint imposed by the lack of a specific document to which to refer. One is therefore in the unfortunate situation of having to focus on generalities and eschew the temptation to delve into more concrete concerns.

Firstly, it now appears that progress on the peace settlement will continue to be made within the context of the United Nations, and probably of the Organization of American States as well, with the two international bodies presumably working together. Despite the traditional unpopularity of the UN with the United States, and that of the OAS with Nicaragua, the two international organizations seem now firmly implicated in the peace process, and it is difficult to imagine their roles being taken over by anyone else.

While this paper does not directly address political verification, the issue of subversion, whether military or political, must in some way be addressed by a verification regime within the arms control arrangements made in the peace process. Verifying that states party to the agreement are not actively subverting other regimes will be a very difficult undertaking. It may very well require mostly civilian personnel who would operate in a number of ways and in a variety of places in order to attempt to reassure other countries that a particular country is not attempting any longer to subvert them directly.

Of course, well recognized is the necessity to ensure that governments do not support foreign subversives who are living within, and operating from, their national territories. Here again, it is difficult to exaggerate the importance of this tasking, which is absolutely essential if peace is to be maintained.

Thus, a watch is required on political activities of both governments and private individuals or groups, who might be tempted to assist subversives from other countries, or even to subvert directly those other countries. This watch would require activity in capital cities, and possibly in other towns in various national territories. It might also have a dimension needing investigation along borders and, in certain circumstances, in zones where irregulars might operate even after a peace accord is signed.

Moving from this particular, though complicated, role to more general ones, it is clear that inspection teams — or "observer" teams, if one prefers the term — would do the bulk of the work. These teams might take the form of roving patrols and small liaison missions, whose jobs would include:

- checking the accuracy of information on strengths, manoeuvres and related security matters, especially equipment and weapons, which are given out by national army staffs;

- monitoring actual exercises with a view to discovering whether national armies are complying with accords limiting exercise strengths, scope, areas, weapons' use, national compositions and the like;

- checking training centres and similar institutions for the presence and numbers of foreign advisers in accordance with signed agreements;

- monitoring ports and airports, as well as entry points by road for movement of goods, equipment, and personnel; and

- monitoring these same localities for arrival of weapons (in terms of both numbers and sophistication).

In addition, there would be a need for naval equivalents of these land inspection teams operating with similar objectives along key coasts, on the San Juan River, on important lakes — particularly Lake Nicaragua — and, of course, in the Gulf of Fonseca itself.

The naval side of a verification regime receives much less attention than does the land component. This is not surprising, given the overwhelming complexities involved already in land verification. However, it should be pointed out that naval craft, probably of launch size, will be required perhaps with larger ships to support them. Countries involved in the verification program would be well advised to consider this requirement, as local resources will be both limited, and perhaps altogether unavailable. Neither Canada, West Germany, nor Spain would find it easy to dispatch small craft on such a mission, although expectations might be that the Canadian Navy operating from the West coast could undertake

the task. This would not be easy for that force to mount, especially if the job requires a major fleet unit to accompany the smaller craft. One is tempted to conclude that sharing the tasking between Canada and its two European partners would be the logical solution, with perhaps Canada providing the small craft and the occasional major surface unit, while the bulk of the latter vessels came from Spain and West Germany. More analysis of this problem is needed.[5]

More complicated and demanding still would be the requirement both for air equivalents and their land support adjuncts. Air resources would be needed and would have to come from the parties that had agreed to back the verification system. It is inconceivable that a monitoring force could operate in this region without helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft available for verifying activities, not so much at air bases or major airports, but at the myriad uncontrolled (or under-controlled) landing strips which dot the region, and which have become so much more numerous as a consequence of the irregular fighting witnessed in Central America over the past decade or more. In addition, the role of airborne remote sensors in the verification systems deserves serious attention. A recent Canadian study suggests the potential advantages of such techniques.[6]

There would be a need for spot checks of key installations and depots, of potential areas of concentration of equipment, and of weapons which were being removed from the inventories of states parties. As in peacekeeping operations, there would be a requirement for a sophisticated communications system linking the observer mission's component parts, between mission headquarters and their local national governments, between field and staff elements of the missions in each Central American country, and a co-ordinating system among all of the above. Given the terrain, distances, frequently bad weather, and poor transportation networks characteristic of most of the region, operating such a system would be far from easy.

In addition, the observer mission could expect to be busy investigating concerns about violations of, or non-compliance with, the commitments made in the relevant accords. This is, of course, the essence of verification regimes as they are now discussed and, given the complexities of the Central American situation and the nature of the groups involved, concerns of this kind may well be numerous and not entirely without justification.

The ease or difficulty with which a number of the tasks discussed above can or might be accomplished is briefly analyzed in a previous paper by the author,[7] and will not be repeated here. Suffice to say that manpower requirements are likely to be more extensive than was at first thought probable when national staffs in the three key verifying countries were initially consulted. One now usually refers to a minimum force of between 300 and 600 all ranks, if there is no requirement for a force interposed between either rival nation, or between government

and insurgent armies within a particular state. This is, of course, a big "if," and one which depends completely on the eventual overall accord signed, and its reception by armed insurgents in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras operating against Nicaragua.

It is hardly surprising that Canadian, Spanish and West German military planners have wanted to receive co-operation from all interested governments and irregular armed groupings for a technical mission to conduct a reconnaissance on the ground. This mission would continue attempts to assess in much more detail the kind of problems a verification regime and peacekeeping force would have to address once established in the region. Specifically, it would look further at land, air and maritime requirements, as well as issues connected with legal, public relations, personnel, intelligence, administration, financial, logistics and transport considerations.

Most important in dealing with the "how" of verification at this stage is to emphasize the vital need for a verification agency and missions attached thereto capable of patience and tact in dealing with armies and general publics little accustomed to the idea of a peacekeeping force and, in the case of the armed forces, resentful of its interventions in matters the military feels it can best resolve by itself.

As has been previously emphasized, it must also be remembered that not only among disaffected elements of the population, of both rightist and leftist persuasions, but also within the armed forces of the host states themselves, there will be significant opposition to an international presence on their soil. The people involved will also frequently be armed, either legitimately or illegitimately, and will come from a society where "the settling of accounts" through violence is an established tradition. It may well be decided that for a variety of very good reasons, verifying officers, either military or civilian, will go about their jobs unarmed. However, the Central American embroglio is of such a nature as to mean that peacekeepers may well more often be the targets of ill-disciplined and disaffected officers of host country armed forces than has ever been the case in the past. This complicating factor is by no means a reason for not undertaking the verifying and peacekeeping roles, but merely a caveat suggesting that attention should be addressed in the appropriate quarters to this issue. The sort of banditry in which Contra members have recently been involved, both inside and outside Nicaragua, reinforce concerns about personnel from this movement being both armed and outside normal contexts of military discipline. This state of affairs could complicate an already potentially dangerous situation.

Another matter related to how such a verifying role for an arms control regime might be brought into existence is, of course, how to pay for it. This operation will be expensive, in money, personnel, administrative and equipment terms.

Land, sea and air verification is an expensive business. If the United Nations and the OAS take on the mission, the previous thorny problem of funding for Canada, West Germany and Spain moves from being a direct national concern to one faced within a larger and more customary forum.

If, as mentioned previously by the author,[8] technical considerations could be very important in the general verification of a Central American peace accord, such technical considerations may be less applicable to verification of the arms control segment of the general peace settlement. Issues of area coverage — detection, discrimination and sensors; communications and reporting; control, ease of operation and maintenance; and data preservation, distribution and false alarms — while important, are not so vital in verifying the arms control regime envisaged as they are in dealing with the activities of insurgent groups actively at war, or only recently so, with their governments.

The large areas concerned remain, of course, a source of worry to a verification agency looking at an arms control regime, just as they are for verifiers of a general peace accord. However, in the context of such an agreement and the presumed incorporation of rebel groups into the national fabric, area coverage difficulties are greatly lessened. Inspection teams and investigators of complaints and alleged violations will, of course, still have to confront difficult terrain conditions in several border regions, especially those of Honduras/Nicaragua, El Salvador/Honduras, and probably Costa Rica/Nicaragua, Guatemala/Mexico, and El Salvador/Guatemala as well. The total area of the five republics is nearly 450 000 km^2, with hundreds of kilometres of seacoast, rivers and large lakes added to the picture. Airspace is equally vast, of course, and the tradition of illegal use of airstrips, and of the improper employment of small aircraft, is old and strong.

Detection and discrimination problems often discussed in works on verification do not totally disappear in an arms control regime context, but are again lessened by the more "official" nature of the operations of missions involved in verification. The requirements for close coverage of sensitive areas is reduced, since movement of groups of men would no longer be likely to be frequent, or even necessarily clandestine. Some sensor and other detection capability must, of course, be maintained, but it is at a level of magnitude lower than when irregular forces are involved.

One sees, then, that a verification arrangement aiming to assist in dispelling mutual distrust and, thereby, in strengthening confidence among the Central American states can well be envisaged. However, this arrangement must be understood to be a complex objective well-endowed with challenges for any international organizations undertaking it, as well as for the key countries assisting the effort.

Who Would Do the Verifying?

From the beginning of the discussions on verification of a Central American peace accord, not to mention of an arms control regime that might result therefrom, the question of who would mount a verification operation has been behind the scenes and largely latent. Since an analysis of what was likely to be involved in the verifying operation was uncertain (to say the least), given the absence of an accord whose provisions one was to verify, it seemed premature to advance too far on the further issue of who would be involved.

The efforts made by the Contadora Group — and later by the Contadora Support Group — suggested at first that there was some potential for Mexico, Panama, Colombia and Venezuela, and then for Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and Uruguay to have some role in the verification proceedings since they had had a role already in the negotiations of the peace agreement itself. The rejection by the Central American states in the winter of 1987-88 of the CIVS report on compliance with Esquipulas II was a shock for both these groups, but particularly for the four Contadora states. They felt rebuffed in their attempt to find peace, and felt the Central Americans were determined to "go it alone" in an unrealistic attempt to exclude outside influence and assistance from the peace process in the region. While it is true that Esquipulas II left security matters and verification in the hands of Contadora, as time went on and it became clear that any verifying agency would be expected by the Central Americans to report to them rather than to an impartial overseeing body, the four Contadora states could see they were no longer wanted.

Canada had, since the beginning of the Contadora initiative in 1983, vociferously supported that peace effort, and applauded both its objectives and successes. West Germany, alarmed at the potential of the Central American crisis to further undermine an already shaky NATO cohesion where "out-of-area" commitments were concerned, also sought to reinforce efforts to bring about an overall peace to Central America. In Spain, the socialist government of Felipe González inherited a strong tradition of Spanish concern for Central America, and, as mentioned previously, a determination to act as a spokesperson for that region within the councils of both NATO and the European Economic Community. Thus, Central American states could look to three powers, without direct interests in the region but with great sympathy for the peace process, as potential sources of help in furthering efforts towards a settlement.

Gradually, these three NATO allies of the United States began to take on a leadership role, and to be seen as active potential participants within the framework of possible agreements. The limitations on their utility were clear to them, if not necessarily to the Central Americans, from the beginning of discussion on such

a role for them. Canada has had great peacekeeping experience, second to none, but is already stretched thinly, not only in terms of its peacekeeping activity, but also of its NATO, NORAD, and sovereignty commitments. West Germany is constitutionally forbidden to dispatch troops abroad, although this limitation could be interpreted in a fashion which might allow some flexibility. Spain has large forces, although only with extremely limited experience in peacekeeping, and despite the possible implications of its former colonial position in the region, could no doubt assist greatly.

Technically, Canadians could provide skilled leadership and planning, as well as some troop strength to an observer mission in Central America. While the appropriate linguistic capabilities of Canadian Forces personnel might be limited for operations in Central America, they are far from nil, and peacekeeping experts agree that such limitations do not exclude by any means the usefulness of non-Spanish-speaking troops. Canada's equipment position is far from one of luxury, but the country would be able to assist marginally in this area as well.

West Germany has large forces with excellent equipment, and possesses large stocks of helicopters and land vehicles which would be of great advantage in an observer mission in the Central American region. While also lacking in Spanish-speaking personnel in their forces, and in civilian and police cadres, the West Germans have large enough pools from which to draw to address these deficiencies.

The Spanish face other sorts of problems. They are obviously capable of providing any number of personnel with the linguistic capabilities required for observation and verification duties in Central America. On the other hand, the restructuring of the Spanish armed forces for a NATO role on the southwestern flank of Europe is engaging military energies and a large percentage of the defence budget at home, and will do so for several years to come. Equipment stocks here also include a significant number of helicopters and land vehicles, but Madrid, or at least military authorities there, might be rather reluctant to see these resources moved far from the centre of Spain's defence concerns. Notwithstanding the above, the Spanish government is clearly interested in helping the peace process along, and would be willing to invest seriously in such an operation. Spain is now undertaking small peacekeeping operations with the UN, and has recently set up a directorate for peacekeeping operations within the Foreign Ministry.

There are thus at least three states which have expressed a willingness to, and who are indeed already involved in, help for the Central American peace process, and specifically the verification aspects thereof. The three have already met on occasion to do preliminary work in the design of a peacekeeping mission for the region. Madrid, Bonn and Ottawa remain willing to assist despite running up against the vast difficulties inherent in the lack of a clear and specific peace accord, a clear mandate for the peacekeeping mission, and permission to conduct a technical reconnaissance mission within the region.

In early talks on these issues, it had appeared that Norway also would join with Canada, Spain and West Germany as key actors in the verification and peacekeeping sides of the regional peace process. Unfortunately, difficult relations between San Salvador and Oslo appear to have led to a rejection by the former country of the latter's participation in such initiatives. No other country has so far stepped to the fore alongside the leading three, but the requirements likely for such an observer mission and such a verification mission strongly suggest that assistance will be needed from elsewhere.

Where can the three countries currently involved look for such assistance? Ideally, Latin America would provide several potential collaborators in the verification and general peacekeeping requirements. Since the 1970s, a series of former dictatorial regimes have given way to democracies in the Latin American region. Some of these have shown considerable interest in taking part in peacekeeping operations, and there would seem to be little reason for them to react negatively to a request for assistance from either the United Nations, the Organization of American States, or both. Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay, because of their status as members of the Contadora Support Group, should be ideal members of such a pool of assisting states.

Unfortunately, the situation is not very clear, or necessarily positive where these countries are concerned. Argentina, for example, has, of course, something of a bad name in Central America after its co-operation with the Somoza regime in the late 1970s and with El Salvador, and in its general support of the most repressive local dictatorships up to 1983. There is no doubt that the arrival of the Alfonsin government to power, and the establishment of a seemingly stable democracy, has changed Central American views on Argentina, but the legacy is such that it might be difficult for some to work with armed forces which have shown so little solidity in their devotion to the new government in Buenos Aires.

Brazil, on the other hand, seems to be enjoying a stable democracy at the moment, and has the forces to assist dramatically any peacekeeping operation. It has both the numbers and the equipment to make a valuable contribution, and it has behind it some peacekeeping experience, as well as a desire to play a role in the peace process. While not Spanish-speaking, the Brazilian soldier is often able to understand Spanish, and to make do among Spanish speakers. In addition, Portuguese is sufficiently similar to Spanish to permit Brazilians to read the other language, and to acquire it relatively quickly. It is true that further to the south in Latin America there is a fear of Brazilian eventual drives for hegemony in the region. These concerns have been heightened by the dramatic loss of relative power by Argentina, Brazil's traditional rival for regional hegemony and influence. Most of the country's neighbours now clearly feel the pressure in this regard. Nonetheless, this fear is much less evident farther north, and hardly at all in Central America itself. It is felt, therefore, that if Brazil could be interested in assisting in the verification and peacekeeping efforts, that help should be gratefully welcomed.

Peru has also been active in support of the peace effort in Central America. However, Lima is far too troubled by the Sendero Luminoso near-insurgency with its thousands of casualties caused to date to be able to be of much help in the provision of military personnel to the verification of an eventual arms control regime, not to mention to provide significant manpower resources to a peacekeeping operation.

Uruguay's armed forces are not so numerous as those of the other three Latin American countries mentioned so far. Nonetheless, they are a significant force, they have recent peacekeeping experience, they are Spanish-speaking, and they are reasonably well-equipped. While they also have a certain negative tinge to their reputation as a result of the years of repression before the recent re-establishment of democracy, they are not the forces of a great power, even on a regional scale, and they have no direct experience with Central America which could jeopardize their acceptability by any party in that area. Montevideo's interest in the Central American peace process has so far been obvious, and it might be possible to interest it as well in helping in a limited way with manpower and other resources.

Moving back for a moment from the Support Group to Contadora's members themselves, prospective collaborators are again not as numerous as one might first imagine. Panama, in the throes of severe instability and threatened civil war, is hardly in a position to be of assistance, even if she were acceptable to all five Central American republics. Nor are her forces large enough, or properly configured, for such a role. Mexico is simply too big, too close, too involved, and too much the object of suspicion on the part of Central Americans for one to consider its forces to be welcome in the region.

Colombia offers a very interesting case. While its forces are deeply involved in fighting a wide range of insurgent groups and in trying to win a massive drug-related war, Bogotá is still willing to make available some troops for Central America if it is clear that they will be welcome, and that a Colombian role in the region will be well seen in the five capitals.

Despite some recent unrest, Venezuela is calm under the re-established government of Carlos Andrés-Pérez, a head of government who sees a larger role for his country in the whole of the Caribbean Basin as a highly desirable goal. The Venezuelan army is of good size, and has abundant and modern equipment. More importantly, the Venezuelan infantry is sizeable and well-trained, consisting of eleven line, five jungle, and six ranger battalions. Thus, both these countries, if acceptable to all parties to the conflict farther north, could conceivably be of help.

It is much more difficult to comment on other Latin American countries' willingness to embark on such a course of action. In the view of this author, for a variety of reasons — largely political — one can exclude the participation of Chile, Haiti and Paraguay. Ecuador, Bolivia and the Dominican Republic are more difficult, however, to judge at this time.

Turning to Europe, there may be other sources of assistance from this quarter. The Netherlands is currently active in more than one peacekeeping operation, has had some further experience with this type of activity in the past, and looks on peacekeeping in a clearly favourable way. In addition, Dutch public opinion has been quite concerned with the Central American situation, and being seen to be doing something about it might be considered positively by the government in The Hague.

The Italian armed forces are both large and well-equipped, and have considerable recent peacekeeping experience. While so far not overly forward on issues related to Central American peace, Italy has nonetheless shown concern over a number of matters connected with the situation. The Christian Democratic Party of Italy is closely linked to similar political groupings in Central America, and particularly with the Salvadorean Christian Democrats. Indeed, the largest single national aid program in the Italian inventory is that for El Salvador, and this has reflected the special links between the two parties. Italians would offer great linguistic capabilities to a verification agency and peacekeeping force in Central America, since the two languages of Spanish and Italian are sufficiently similar to make for relative ease of communication. In addition, Italians are popular in all of Latin America, and make friends and contacts freely.

Sweden is, naturally enough given its experience, an obvious country to which to turn when an important peacekeeping operation is contemplated. Despite the elimination of the Cyprus commitment recently, Stockholm is still active in several United Nations peacekeeping endeavours, and might be willing to add another to its list. Here again, public opinion would probably favour such an initiative, but it must be cautioned that, up until now, perhaps as a result of recent defence cuts, there has been relatively little reaction from Sweden on this subject. A further cautionary note must be sounded given the existence of some reluctance on the part of certain states in the area where Swedish participation is concerned.

Other European countries currently active in peacekeeping are the Republic of Ireland, Poland, Denmark, Finland and Austria. It is unlikely to be helpful to have a member of the Warsaw Pact represented in a peacekeeping and verification activity in what Washington continues to consider "its own backyard." While Warsaw has provided respected forces to previous and current UN missions, the

peace process in Central America is viewed already with sufficient suspicion in the United States, without provoking further negativism on that country's part. On the other hand, Denmark, as another NATO member, could be quite useful if it could be convinced to join in. Yet again, the government in Copenhagen faces a public opinion that might well favour Danish participation.

Ireland's small army is already heavily committed in Lebanon and elsewhere in the Middle East. In addition, its dependence on reserve forces might render it less able to provide the kind of troops needed in Central America. Finland, likewise, is deeply involved with numerous troops in the Middle East and elsewhere, and is unlikely to be tempted into a further commitment at this time. Austrian experience with peacekeeping has also been reasonably extensive, and some observers have mentioned Vienna as a source of help. As far as is publicly known, there has been little reaction from that country to the idea of its assisting in any verification or peacekeeping in the Central American region, but its experience, appreciable troop strength, and vehicular resources could conceivably be helpful.

Outside of Europe, Australia and New Zealand, Morocco and Ghana, Indonesia, Fiji, and India are sometimes mentioned as possible collaborators. At the moment, however, there appears to be little interest in those countries' capitals for such a role. Lastly, Japan is sometimes mentioned, both because of its increasing economic stake in Latin America, and because of its increasingly high profile in international relations and peace-related initiatives in general. However, Japan faces constitutional restrictions (on her ability to send troops abroad) which are probably even tighter than those faced by West Germany. Thus, for the moment, it is unlikely that Tokyo will offer more than perhaps diplomatic and financial assistance.

In any discussion of the broadening of the group of states helping out in the verification of an arms control regime in Central America, and in the larger taskings of verification and peacekeeping possible in that region, one must be wary of any attempt to increase the number of players. Previous experience has shown that a vast number of contributors of relatively small numbers of personnel can complicate — politically and militarily — the operation on the ground. While such a large group of countries might provide diplomatic and financial advantages, the political and military disadvantages argue for a limited number of significant contributors of manpower and resources to the task at hand.

The possibility of assistance from the United States is also one which attracts a great deal of attention. Verification regimes elsewhere, and particularly in the Middle East, have benefitted enormously from American logistic, transport and communications support. But more important even than these was the provision of highly efficient satellite and aerial reconnaissance to reinforce the verifying

activities of personnel and sensors on the land. A paper by Dr. Brian Mandell of Carleton University has emphasized the enormous assistance this gave in the Sinai verification operation, and the extraordinary way this remote sensing support helped in maintaining the confidence of both the Egyptians and the Israelis in the verification regime.[9] Recent research undertaken by the Canadian government has also explored the utility of overhead remote sensors for peacekeeping.[10]

It is unnecessary to state that the obstacle to this involvement by the United States in a Central American verification regime has been the extreme suspicion with which the United States views the whole process of the search for peace in the region. Washington has felt that its legitimate security concerns have been forgotten — or at best, downplayed — in both the Contadora and the Esquipulas negotiations. It has reacted with a negative attitude to the process as a whole, and has aimed instead at bringing the FSLN to heel through its own policy of "carrot and stick." There is at the moment, however, some optimism in circles close to the peace process where United States participation is concerned. The administration of President Bush, while not fully endorsing the process of peace in Central America, has nonetheless endorsed Esquipulas II, and seemed much more favourable in recent months to those like Canada that are active in pushing the peace process along.

If this trend were to continue, and if the United States can see that a peace settlement would include its three stated objectives in Central America (the return of Warsaw Pact and Cuban advisers home from Nicaragua, the end of Nicaraguan military links with Havana and Moscow, and a cutoff of Nicaraguan assistance to subversion in El Salvador and elsewhere), it is conceivable that the United States might actively back a peace process and a verification regime within that process. This might be especially true if the three key actors in the verification regime were all seen to be conservative members of the Western alliance, and good friends of the United States. There is simply no doubt that the addition of American support for a verification regime would transform its possibilities of success, just as there can be no doubt that the United States' political acquiescence to the peace process would increase immeasurably its chances of achieving its goals.

Prospects and Conclusion

This paper has not aimed to produce the final word on what the verification provisions of an eventual arms control regime applicable in Central America might be. The international community is still some distance away, even accepting an optimistic view of future events, from knowing what an overall peace settlement in Central America would involve. Furthermore, it is far from certain what the final form of an arms control regime would be which could act effectively as an underpinning for this peace settlement. Clearly, it is even more difficult with these basic documents and terms of reference missing to move on to discuss in any detail the verification requirements needed to sustain the arms control regime. Thus, this paper has aimed to produce a general analysis of what would need to be verified, how the verification would be carried out, and who might take on the responsibilities of verification.

In order for the paper to be read as a whole, it has been necessary to include background, both on the history and geography of the region, as well as on the context and current situation in which the Central American peace process finds itself. No discussion of an acceptable arms control regime can be contemplated without an understanding of the threat perceptions which lie behind the mutual distrust that an overall arms control regime will have to be overcome. Thus, a brief description of the five republics' threat perceptions, as well as United States views on such matters, has been included, and, it is hoped, this has helped to set the scene for discussion of one possible arms control regime.

Given the current negative picture presented by much of the Central American situation, it is obviously necessary to promote factors that may diminish the threat perceptions in the various capitals, and thus provide an environment conducive to an eventual peace settlement, and to a possible acceptance of an arms control regime.

As argued elsewhere, it is felt that an arms control regime can be put in place which could greatly assist in reducing tensions and mutual distrust, and contribute enormously as a major confidence-building measure — or, more logically, series of measures — in the context of a peace settlement. The weaknesses, assumptions and constraints of such a paper, as briefly discussed in the introduction, mean that a number of issues one might have liked to address have not been the object of discussion here. One particular element of the equation which it would have been perhaps useful to look at is that of "étapisme"; that is, the idea that if an overall settlement and arms control regime, and an overall verification system for it, cannot easily be achieved, then possibly local, bilateral, or more limited agreements could be reached between at least some — if not all — of the actors on the Central American scene. This would need to be the subject of a separate or

more likely several separate papers, discussing individual situations involving two or more states in the region or, indeed, contexts involving governments and insurgent groups.

This paper concludes that a series of controls, reductions, modifications and, in some cases, improvements to the armed forces of the Central American states will imply a major verification system to ensure that they reduce tensions in the region, and contribute to the successful functioning of the post-settlement peace in Central America. These reductions will be to troop strengths, equipment and weapons, as well as to the number and role of foreign advisers. They will be accompanied by verification of a wide range of activities, particularly manoeuvres and deployment, which will occur over a wide area and which will affect air, naval and land activities on the part of the region's armed forces. Such reductions will have significant political impacts within the countries affected by them and will, it is hoped, have the favourable international effects mentioned. Such reductions may well be accompanied by specific increases in capabilities, particularly as mentioned in the case of anti-aircraft, anti-tank and engineer capabilities.

Within this context, the verifying agency will need to monitor a whole range of activities, including reductions in strength and equipment, the departure of advisers, weapons and equipment purchases, manoeuvres and border activities, deployments and potential undertakings favouring subversion in neighbouring states.

The combination of land, sea and air patrols, inspections, investigation of complaints, systems monitoring, attendance at manoeuvres, presence at staff headquarters, and the maintenance of communications will, in conjunction with all the support activities related to these, require a major verification effort in a situation of great complexity. Technical difficulties, terrain, weather and local opposition will combine with this complexity to make the job a highly challenging one.

Three countries have already come forward with offers of assistance, and Canada has been at the forefront of this group. It will be necessary to enlist the diplomatic, military and financial assistance of other states, if one is to achieve the verification objectives likely to be set down in the eventual mandating document. On the other hand, it will be advisable to limit the total number of states conducting the operation in order to avoid confusion and the addition of further complications of all kinds to the work of the agency as a whole, and the observer missions in particular. The addition of overhead remote sensing resources (satellite and airborne) to the army, navy and air force personnel and equipment provided would be of potentially great use, as it has been elsewhere in peacekeeping and verification activities in the past. One may well regret the lack of progress in considering such an option which could have offered interesting alternatives to uncertain

U.S. assistance with satellite surveillance. It will be necessary also to make clear to the Central American countries the implications of hosting such a verification operation, and such observer missions.

It is clear that the job will not be easy and, as mentioned, will require diplomacy and tact at all levels, and a clear understanding of the risks involved. Nonetheless, given an overall settlement and the resulting clear mandate for a verification agency to tackle the tasks associated with verifying an arms control regime coming out of this settlement, there is no reason why a major contribution to peace in the Central American region cannot be achieved by the application of this well-tried approach to the reduction of tensions and the building of confidence among states.

NOTES

1. Lars Schoultz, *National Security and United States Policy in Latin America*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

2. In "Verification of a Central American Peace Accord," *Arms Control Verification Occasional Papers No. 2* (Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1989), this author suggests that under the headings mentioned, there would be included the following:

Governmental and Headquarters Levels

1) monitoring notification of national manoeuvres;
2) monitoring notification of international manoeuvres among regional states;
3) monitoring notification of international manoeuvres involving outside states;
4) monitoring dates involved in exercises; and,
5) to the extent possible, verifying the "no intimidation" provision of the peace accords.

Field Level

1) verifying limitations on weaponry and strength levels;
2) verifying limitations on number and length of exercises held;
3) verifying areas used for exercises;
4) verifying nationalities involved in exercises;
5) verifying weapons flow to signatory states;
6) verifying weapons flow to irregular forces;
7) verifying end of support to irregular forces;
8) verifying departure of foreign military forces and advisors; and,
9) verifying use of national territories by regular forces.

Systems Infrastructure

1) setting up of a regional communications system among the governments, armed forces and national agencies concerned, as well with The Verification and Control Commission; and,
2) setting up of a liaison system among the above.

Research

1) preparation of appropriate military preparedness levels for the signatories insofar as weapons and personnel are concerned; and
2) preparation of criteria and value assessments in order to arrive at figures for the preceding requirement.

3. H.P. Klepak, "Verification of a Central American Peace Accord," *Arms Control Verification Occasional Papers No. 2* (Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1989).

4. Josef Goldblat and Victor Millan, "Arms Control in Central America," *Arms Control*, viii, 1 (May 1987), p. 78.

5. For a short discussion of the Central American naval picture, as well as the implications of naval arms control in the region, see Michael A. Morris, *Expansion of Third World Navies*, (London: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 194-195.

6. Canada, *Overhead Remote Sensing for United Nations Peacekeeping*, (Ottawa: External Affairs and International Trade Canada, April 1990).

7. *Supra*, note 3.

8. *Ibid.*

9. Brian Mandell, "The Sinai Experience: Lessons in Multimethod Arms Control Verification and Risk Management," *Arms Control Verification Studies No. 3*, (Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, September 1987).

10. *Supra*, note 6.

Appendix A

Chronology of Political and Military Events: 1962 to 1989

1962

Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) founded by Carlos Fonseca Amador.

1969

War between Honduras and El Salvador.

1975

Honduras begins purchases of the first high-performance jet aircraft obtained by a Central American state when it orders Super-Mystère B.2 fighters from France.

1977

El Salvador begins major expansion of armed forces.

1978

Widening of the Nicaraguan civil war.

1979

FSLN victory in civil war produces a leftist regime in Nicaragua with strong representation from more moderate political sectors.

1981

January: Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional (FMLN) "final offensive" in Salvadorean civil war results in insurgent failure.

September: Honduras, Nicaragua and the United States receive a joint peace proposal from Mexico and France.

1982

Honduras completes acquisition of 17 light tanks (Scorpions and Scimitars) from the United Kingdom.

El Salvador continues expansion of forces to reach 16 000 by the following year.

Nicaragua triples forces over next 12 months, and begins acquisition of a significant tank force.

1983

January: Contadora Group formed at meeting of foreign ministers of Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela; aims at finding a negotiated resolution to the Central American conflicts.

17 July: Declaration of Cancún. Contadora group calls for the international community to help the peace process in Central America, and invites President Reagan and Fidel Castro to associate themselves with the negotiations.

September: Bogotá meeting between Salvadorean government and insurgents.

7-9 September: Document of Objectives of Contadora signed by Central American states, as well as four Contadora members.

21 September: Ratification by the Central American governments of the 21 points included in the document of objectives.

1984

Costa Rica begins increase of strength of Civil Guard by some 40 per cent.

May: Election of Christian Democratic candidate Napoleón Duarte to the Presidency of El Salvador.

June: Draft Contadora Act received with favour by all Central American states.

June: Manzanillo negotiations begin between Nicaragua and the United States.

July: Constituent assembly elected in Guatemala.

September: Foreign ministers of the EC, the Contadora Group, the Central American states, Spain and Portugal meet for the first time in San José, Costa Rica.

October/November: Meetings between Salvadorean government and guerrilla representatives.

November: Presidential and legislative elections in Nicaragua.

1985

Nicaragua nearly doubles its armoured strength in tanks, as well as more than doubling its overall troop strength.

January: U.S. withdraws from Manzanillo dialogue with Nicaragua.

May: U.S. imposes commercial embargo on Nicaragua.

July: Contadora Support Group set up in Lima by Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay.

August: Cartagena communiqué of Contadora and its support group emphasizes the requirement for peace in the Central American region.

September: Bogotá meeting between Salvadorean government and insurgents.

November: Second EC-Central America-Contadora meeting also attended by foreign ministers of Spain and Portugal.

November: José Azcona Hoyo elected president of Honduras (Liberal Party candidate).

December: Vinicio Cerezo, a Christian Democrat, elected President of Guatemala.

1986

January: Caraballeda Statement reflects increased Contadora and Support Group efforts for peace, security and democracy in the region.

May: First Central American Summit (Esquipulas I) of five presidents. Declaration of Esquipulas. Well received by major interested international groups.

June: International Court of Justice finds in favour of Nicaragua, and against the United States, in the case of the latter's hostile acts.

November: Iran-Contragate scandal erupts.

December: United Nations condemns U.S. embargo on, and military activities against, Nicaragua.

1987

January/February: UN and OAS secretaries-general begin a peace mission in Central America.

February: Third EC-Contadora-Central American foreign ministers' conference.

February: Four other Central American presidents meet in the absence of Nicaragua's Ortega, who was not invited. The Arias Peace Plan is presented by the Costa Rican president.

August: Second summit of all five presidents. Signature of Esquipulas II, or the Guatemala Accord, entitled Procedure for the Establishment of a Firm and Lasting Peace in Central America. Constitution of an international commission of verification and follow-up (CIVS) for the accord. It includes 13 foreign ministers (Contadora, Contadora Support, and five Central American), plus the OAS Secretary-General and a United Nations representative.

October: Lifting of a series of press control measures in Nicaragua.

October: Treaty approved to set up a Central American parliament.

October: Salvadorean government and insurgents meet through mediation of Monsignor Arturo Rivera y Damas.

October: Guatemalan government and insurgents have discussions in Madrid.

November: Activities related to Esquipulas II in all five countries.

December: Two sets of indirect talks between FSLN and Contras occur in Santo Domingo.

1988

January: CIVS inspection tour of Central America. Reports on 12 January.

15-16 January: Esquipulas III. While reaffirming Esquipulas II, the Central American presidents abolish the CIVS.

January/February: First two sets of direct FSLN-Contra talks.

28 February-1 March: Fourth EC-Contadora-Central American meeting in Hamburg. Support by EC for Central American recovery plan.

March: Sapoá accord between FSLN government and Contras. Cease-fire in Nicaragua to begin.

June: Difficulties in further FSLN-Contra negotiations. Cease-fire holds despite some minor violations.

1989

January: FMLN offers to abandon armed struggle and take part in elections if safety guarantees are made and elections are postponed and reformed, and if the United States is not permitted to influence them.

January: Reagan administration replaced by that of President Bush.

February: Tesoro Beach accord includes further democratization measures affecting particularly Nicaragua, and calls for joint action to deal with the Contra problem.

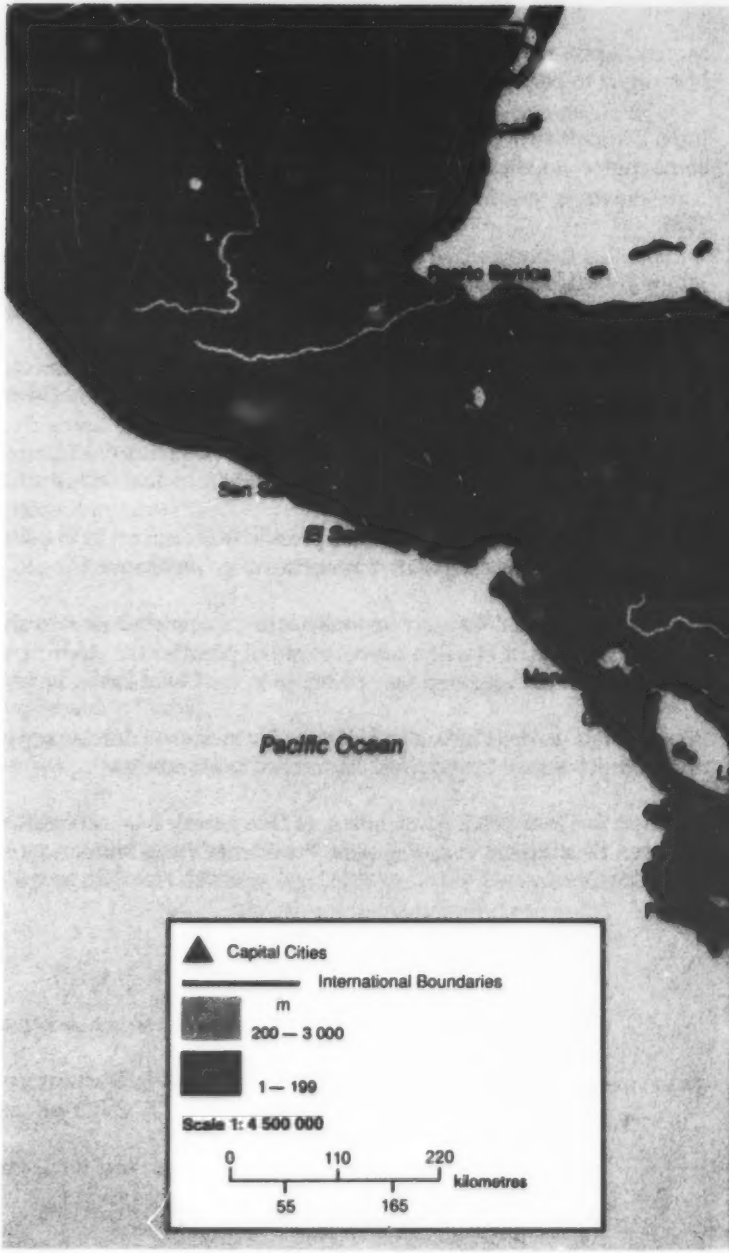
March: Rightist ARENA party wins presidential election in El Salvador. Will control executive and legislative branches of government.

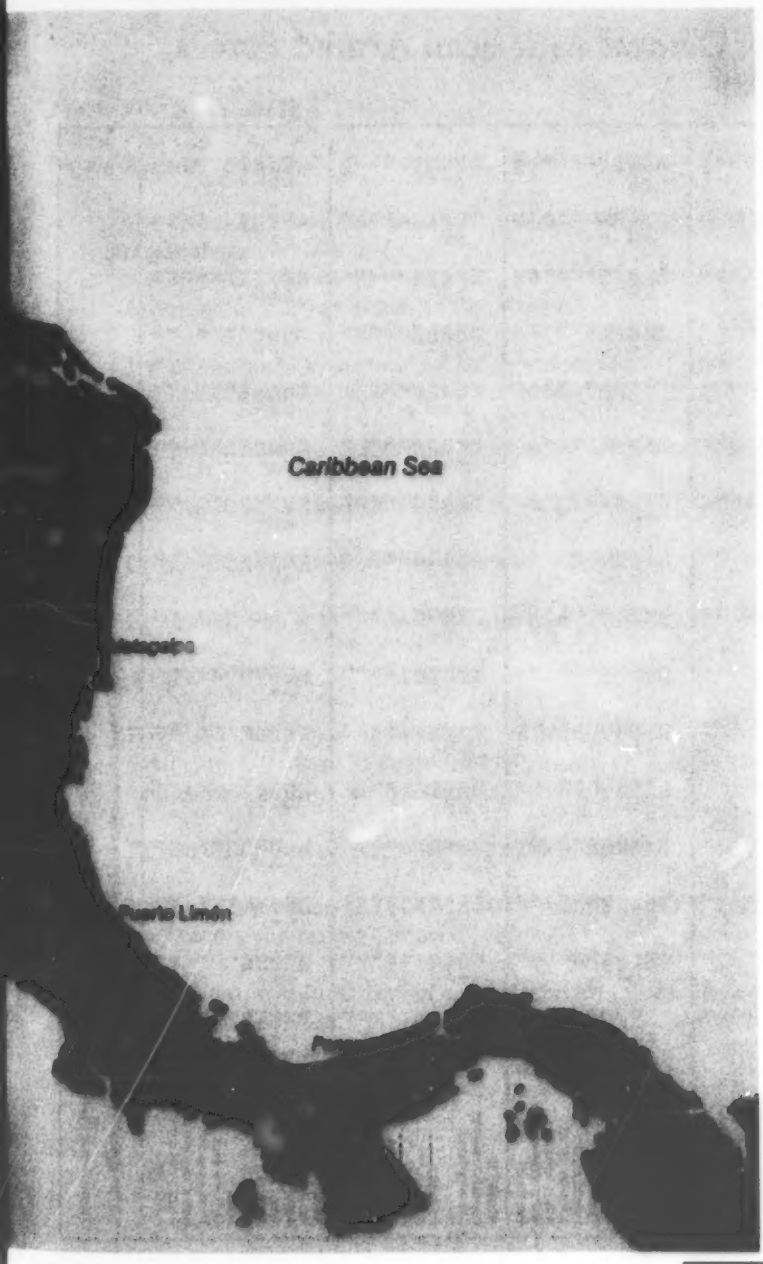
May: Second armed forces coup attempt in Guatemala in last twelve months. General Noriega of Panama moves to annul presidential election results in that country. U.S. reinforces military presence in the Canal Zone.

August: Tela accords include provisions for increased democracy in Nicaragua and definite moves to end Contra presence in Honduras.

October: San José 100th Anniversary of Democracy celebrations. Deep rift evident between Washington and Managua. President Ortega announces end to cease-fire with Contras.

Appendix B — Map of Central America




Caribbean Sea

Appendix C

Growth of Central American Armed Forces, 1972 to 1989

	1972–73	1973–74	1974–75	1975–76	1976–77	1977–78	1978–79	1979–80	1980–81	1981–82	1982–83	1983–84	1984–85	1985–86	1986–87	1987–88	1988–89
EL SALVADOR																	
Population (millions)	3.6	3.6	3.6	4.1	4.2	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.8	4.9	5.3	5.5	5.6	5.8	5.9
Active personnel	5 600	5 600	5 150	5 150	7 150	7 150	6 650	6 650	7 200	9 000	16 000	26 000	41 000	42 500	42 500	47 000	38 000
Army	4 500	4 500	4 000	5 000	6 000	6 000	5 500	5 500	6 000	8 000	14 000	24 000	38 000	38 500	38 500	43 000	36 000
Air force	1 000	1 000	1 000	1 000	1 000	1 000	1 000	1 000	1 000	1 000	2 000	2 000	3 000	4 000	4 000	4 000	2 000
Navy	100	100	150	150	150	150	150	150	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Tanks	?	?	?	12	12	15	15	15	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Combat aircraft	14	14	14	22	24	21	21	21	21	25	27	26	24	26	26	25	28
Transport aircraft	4	4	4	13	11	10	11	11	11	11	16	14	14	15	15	12	12
Armed helicopters	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	12	12	16	16	16	16	23	24
Transport helicopters	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	13	13	19	17	17	17	44	38
Patrol craft	2	2	2	5	4	4	4	5	10	3	4	6	6	6	6	20	N/A[1]
GUATEMALA																	
Population (millions)	5.5	5.7	5.7	5.8	6.0	6.2	6.3	6.5	6.6	7.2	7.6	7.8	8.2	8.4	8.6	8.8	8.6
Active personnel	13 200	11 200	11 400	11 400	10 670	14 300	14 270	17 000	14 000	15 000	21 000	21 000	40 000	31 000	22 000	40 000	42 000
Army	12 000	10 000	10 000	10 000	10 000	13 500	13 500	17 000	14 000	14 000	17 000	17 000	38 000	28 000	20 000	38 000	40 000
Air force	1 000	1 000	1 000	1 000	670	800	770	1 000	1 000	1 000	1 000	1 000	1 000	1 000	1 000	1 000	1 000
Navy	200	200	400	400	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	1 000	1 000	1 000	1 000	1 000
Tanks	16	22	22	22	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Combat aircraft	11	11	11	10	9	10	11	13	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Transport aircraft						12	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
Armed helicopters	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	4	4	4	4	4	6
Transport helicopters	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Patrol craft	6	6	6	6	6	14	11	8	14	15	17	17	17	21	21	11	12
HONDURAS																	
Population (millions)	2.8	2.8	2.9	3.0	2.2	2.3	3.4	3.6	2.7	3.0	4.0	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.7	4.8
Active personnel	5 725	6 000	11 200	14 200	14 200	14 200	11 200	11 200	11 200	13 000	15 000	15 000	17 000	16 000	16 000	16 000	18 700
Army	4 500	4 800	10 000	13 000	13 000	13 000	10 000	10 000	10 000	11 000	13 000	13 000	15 000	14 000	14 000	14 000	15 500
Air force	1 200	1 200	1 200	1 200	1 200	1 200	1 200	1 200	1 200	1 200	1 200	1 200	1 200	1 200	1 200	1 200	2 200
Navy	25	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	100	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	300
Tanks	?	?	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	17	17	16	16	16	15	15	15
Combat aircraft	14	9	14	13	12	22	16	16	24	27	25	25	25	25	25	25	27
Transport aircraft	7	5	6	10	13	7	6	6	6	7	9	15	14	14	16	16	23
Transport helicopters	2	3	3	3	3	—	—	7	3	12	12	17	15	13	11	41	N/A[1]
Patrol craft	3	3	3	—	—	—	—	—	10	14	12	16	9	11	11	20	
NICARAGUA																	
Population (millions)	2.2	2.2	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.7	2.8	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5
Active personnel	7 100	7 100	7 100	7 100	7 100	7 100	8 000	?	?	6 700	21 700	46 000	61 000	62 000	72 000	74 000	77 000
Army	5 400	5 400	5 400	5 400	5 400	5 400	6 000	?	?	5 000	20 000	47 000	61 000	62 000	68 000	70 000	70 000
Air force	1 500	1 500	1 500	1 500	1 500	1 500	1 800	?	?	1 500	1 500	—	—	—	2 000	2 000	4 000
Navy	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	?	?	200	200	—	—	—	1 000	1 000	3 000
Tanks	—	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Combat aircraft	10	10	11	11	10	14	12	11	2	6	28	48	75	100	100	125	150
Transport aircraft	?	10	4	9	8	16	16	16	11	10	9	10	12	17	19	21	17
Armed helicopters	?	?	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7	7	6	7	14	14	12	10
Transport helicopters	—	—	5	6	6	7	8	8	8	8	2	6	4	—	10	12	41
Patrol craft	4	4	6	9	8	8	8	8	10	14	14	14	14	6	25	20	N/A[1]

[1] Not applicable due to changes in the categorization of naval entries in *Military Balance* 1988–89.

Source: Derived from International Institute for Strategic Studies, Military Balance, 1972–73 to 1988–89.

Appendix D

Accords' Main Points

Sapóa Accord

- The Contras to assemble with their weapons in a series of zones while negotiations continued;
- Amnesty for 3 300 prisoners in two stages;
- The government to permit "exclusively humanitarian aid" to go to the Contras provided it was "channeled through neutral organizations";
- The government to "guarantee unrestricted freedom of expression";
- Contras to be allowed to take part in the Esquipulas "national dialogue";
- Government to allow the free return of exiles; and
- Contra fighters to be allowed to participate in elections.

Tesoro Beach

- Proposed Nicaraguan general election brought forward from November 1990 to no later than 25 February 1990, unless the Sandinista regime and opposition parties both agree on another date;
- Revise legislation on election and on freedom of the press and information;
- Release from prison of 1 600 to 1 700 former National Guards and about 1 400 anti-government Contra rebels;
- Elaboration within 90 days of a "joint plan for the demobilization, voluntary repatriation or relocation" of approximately 11 000 Contras and their families currently in camps in southern Honduras.

Tela Accords

- Agreement on timetable for dismantling Nicaraguan Contra rebel camps in Honduras by 5 December 1989;
- Assistance to demobilize all those involved in armed conflict in the region;
- Creation by the OAS and the UN of an "International Commission of Support and Verification (CIAV)" within 30 days of signing of the Agreement to oversee the regional demobilization.

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